

# RAZORCAKE

#34

SIGNAL LOST

JAPANHER

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET

DIRECT CONTROL

AUTHOR  
BRAD WARNER

THE LAST



\$4



# RAZORCAKE

## I SUCK AT BEING AN ADULT.

I'd rather eat candy than brush my teeth. Showers are not my friend. I get cranky because I want to stay up past my bedtime like the other kids. Farts make me giggle. I dance around my room to punk rock records. I read comics and think unicorns are pretty tight. Some of my favorite books are of the pop-up variety.

And I'm turning thirty this November.

Time to turn in my candy stash (all ten-plus pounds of it), slash my bike tires, and settle down. The middle ages are bearing down on me in their luxury sedan and all I can do is hang out, waiting for menopause. Buy me an apron and find me a career.

I've tried to do the whole grown-up thing. I moved in with a dude or two. I made shopping lists and clipped coupons. I got a job at a local school. I stopped dying my hair unnatural colors. Hooray! I done grewed up.

But, I think I've got Peter Pan syndrome: I just won't grow up. I hate doing the dishes (I even had a contract with an ex beau which freed me from my responsibility of having to do them). I usually put off cleaning my room until I've broken something after stepping on it. I forget to return movies and library books. I put in for time off from work to go to shows.

My family, for the most part, sees it as quirky and eccentric, but probably thinks (hope?) I'll grow out of it. I just don't see any reason why I would want to. I mean, sure, I'll probably always

worry about money, but I'm living pretty close to my dream life. It just hasn't changed all that much from when I was I kid. I won't build my life around a job I hate. I won't sacrifice my life, my happiness, or even my potential for fun for a job. I won't take promotions or raises if it means doing more than I'm willing to do for that company.

Instead, I've tried to think first about those things that make me happy and focus on that. It's made my life pretty simple. I work on *Razorcake*, I work to pay the bills, and the rest of my time is my own. I'm perfectly comfortable staying in my room all weekend reading and listening to music. I'm more than content walking a half hour to go buy some strange candy at an Asian market. I would rather spend hours working to make a mixtape just right than to spend minutes comparing financing plans for a new, snazzy car.

I've come to terms with the fact that the lifestyle most people resign themselves to just isn't for me. I'm going to be that old person at the back of the show wearing ear plugs. I'm going to probably be both jaded against and interested in what the kids are up to these days. I'm going to see friends continue to drop in and out of the scene. So what if it's different? I've loved what I've done in my life so far, so I don't see any reason to change it. I embrace it and accept it. And that seems pretty grown up to me.

—Megan

### AD DEADLINES

#### ISSUE #35

September 1st, 2006

#### ISSUE #36

November 1st, 2006

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"Limited minds can only recognize limitations in others."

—Jack London, *Martin Eden*

This issue is dedicated to: The memories of Jim Simmerman—poet, teacher—and Gabby Mantini also to the births of Maggie "Go Metric" Faloon and Michael Arthur Guthrie.

Contact *Razorcake* via our fancy new website: [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org)



**THANK YOU:** Muchos besos to Nuvia for the calavera; never hurts to say it twice—good thoughts go out to Julia Smut's dog, Cujo; thanks for laying out *The Last, Julia*; "Who you starin' at?" thanks to Chris Peigler and Donofthedeat for the Direct Control interview and pictures and thanks to Keith Rosson for laying it out; Dolphins are a touchy subject thanks to BD Williams and Rudy Olivarez for the Japanther interview and pictures; Moms are great and they rule thanks to Chris Peigler and Jack Barfield for the Signal Lost interview and pictures; "Wow, these horse statues have well-defined buttholes" thanks to Aphid Peewit and Chris Baxter for the Brad Warner interview and pictures; "What was the question again? We're really stoned" thanks to Mr. Z for his Teenage Bottlerocket interview and photos; the last time I met him, he was on top of a lady on the sidewalk, eating a pizza at 4 A.M. thanks to Uri Garcia for the Teenage Bottlerocket layout; DIY-by-default, but Susanna from the Bangles thought you were hot thanks

to Ryan Leach for his *The Last* interview and thanks to Joe Nolte for scraping around for the archival shots; It looks like paper people about to burn to death thanks to Kris Tripplaar for his photo in Gary's column; I wish Garth Brooks' star had a mouth so he could drink what Johnny Cash is serving thanks to Rafael Avila for his illustration in Dale's column; He doesn't know what Liz O. looks like, yet he drew her pretty much right on the button thanks to Mitch Clem for his illustration; "Holy shit, half of the town blew up?" thanks to Ruckus Thomas for the Rhythm Chicken picture; Be mean to 'em on the interweb for doing reviews that you disagree thanks to: Newtim, Comrade Bree, Keith Rosson, Jessica T., Buttertooth, Brian Mosher, Daryl, Chris Pepus, Donofthedeat, Lord Kveldulfr, Jimmy Alvarado, Cuss Baxter, Ryan Leach, Sean Koepenick, Aphid Peewit, Chris Devlin, and Kurt Morris. Be thankful their cooties aren't that contagious thanks to Daryl, Don, and Chris for helping us pack and ship the last issue.

## Look at those tiny legs! POOP!

Virgil Suburban Home's first diaper change was a little more than he had bargained for.



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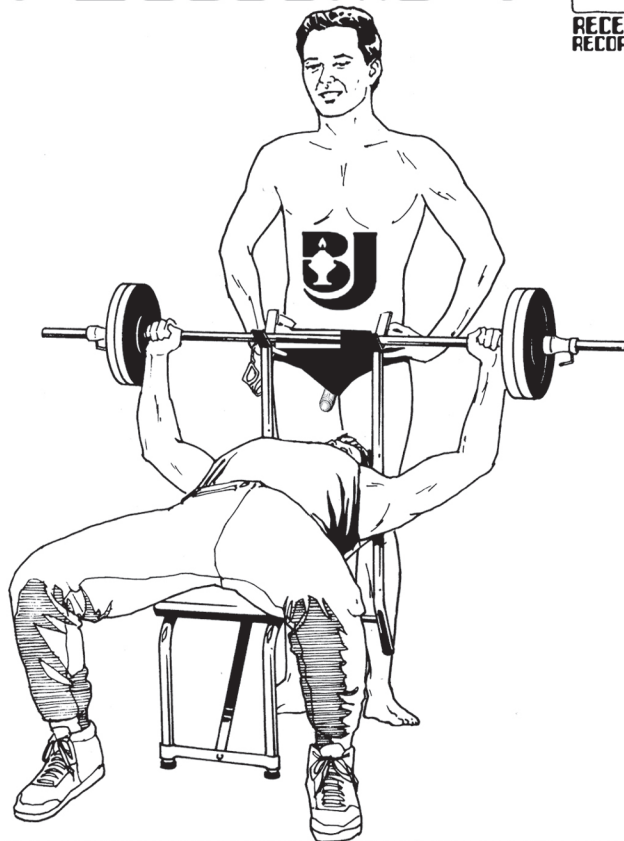
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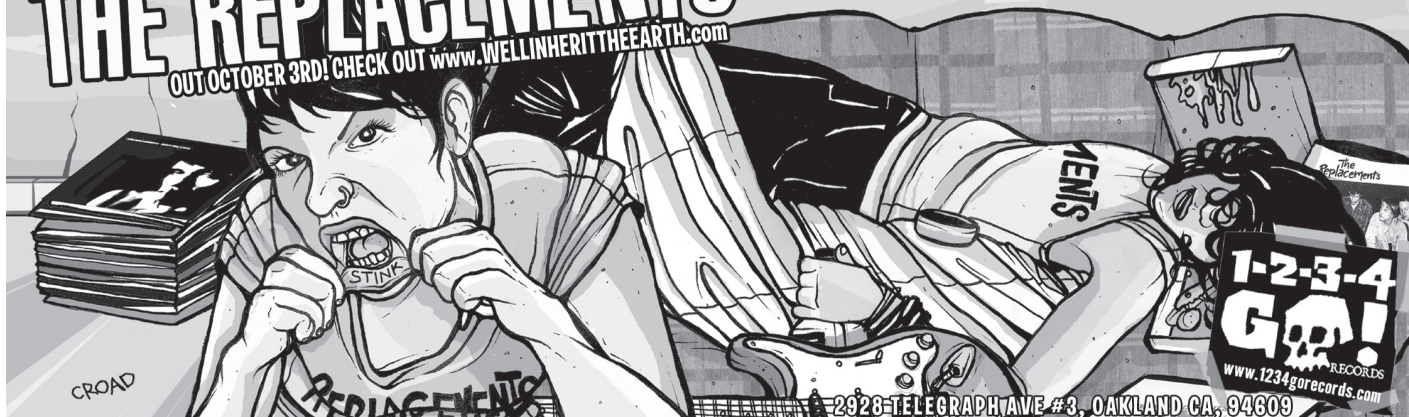


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# RAZORCAKE

Issue #34 October / November 2006

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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc.

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# GUERRILLA MY DREAMS

**"There is no happy ending and you, the listener, have now acquired the burden of spending the next few hours contemplating every line..."**

## Slowly Sinking into *Disintegration*

**"Disintegration is the best album ever"**

—Kyle Broflovski  
(*South Park*)

### THERE IS THIS MOMENT

AFTER I HAVE BROUGHT A BRAND NEW ALBUM HOME FROM THE STORE, BUT BEFORE I HAVE ACTUALLY LISTENED TO IT, WHERE MY CHEST FILLS WITH ANTICIPATION, AS IF I'M WAITING TO FIND OUT THE WINNER OF A CONTEST I HAVE ENTERED. I hold that piece of music in between my hands, fumbling around for a few minutes as I try to catch my fingernail on that edge of the shrink-wrap that will split the clear sheath. Once I hear the rip, I move quickly, tearing the thin but sturdy wrapping and tossing it to the ground. In haste, I open the plastic encasing with a snap and a hope that nothing cracks in the process. Then I slip that piece of music into the stereo, open up the liner notes, and bounce back on my bed, wondering all the while if this album will be worth the next hour I will spend listening to it.

On most occasions, I will attempt to listen to the album only to allow the music to fade into the background as I do something else. The songs will filter in and out of my ears as I continue reading a book, scrawling words onto paper, or fiddling around with a computer. I might perk up for a second if something grabs me, maybe one or two more songs than the one that initially compelled me to buy the album in the first place. Sometimes, after a few months of self-forced listening sessions, the album will grow on me and slowly become a favorite for at least another year. Sometimes, I will never get past the single. Despite the fact that the odds are rarely in the album's favor, I treat every release as though it could be my brand new favorite.

This was the case when I first purchased a copy of *Disintegration*, The Cure's eighth album, which was released in late Spring, 1989. My expectations were high, as I had already fallen for Robert Smith a few years before. "Fascination Street," an oddly danceable number with ominous guitars and the sort of bassline that felt like it could pull you from the ankle down into quicksand,

had been a regular feature on the radio for seemingly the past six months. As the release date crept closer, though, the song gradually gave way to "Lullaby," which was as quiver-inducing as any childhood chant repeated throughout a horror movie. With those two songs fighting for airplay in my mind, I knew that the album would be good. I never realized, though, that it would maintain status as the most significant piece of music in my collection, one of very few items I can claim to own on cassette, vinyl, and compact disc.

My first copy of the album was a cassette tape that, unlike the record, bore the same nearly epic seventy-one-minute track listing as the compact disc. (*Disintegration* was recorded specifically for a CD release and so the songs "Last Dance" and "Homesick" were omitted from the vinyl edition due to space constraints.) The fact that The Cure opted to record specifically for CD baffled me at first on the grounds that, in 1989, I knew a whopping one person who owned a CD player. My parents, like others, remained convinced that the family stereo system should remain disc-less until it was proven that no better technology would immediately follow its emergence (see Beta and VHS or Atari and Nintendo for the source of such logic). Through my untrained ears, however, the cassette could sound no different than the CD, and so I followed the instructions listed below the credits on the liner notes and turned up the boom box volume as loud as possible before I could hear a pound on the door and screams of "Liz, turn that down!"

From the album's opening note, I had this feeling that *Disintegration* would be different from anything that I had ever heard before. It was those few seconds of almost-silence with something (a guitar? a keyboard?) gurgling underneath like some monumental occurrence would erupt before I could actually figure out what instrument was playing. Then there was a crash and a wash of keyboards and guitars against this rhythm that would start and stop and then start again. "I think it's dark and it looks like rain," he sang, a quote from a mysterious "you" that I, perhaps like many Cure fans, would presume to be his wife Mary. The

song mimicked the cover art, staring at me as I listened, Robert's face mixed in a sea of scattered flowers, all colored in diluted shades of blue-black, as if the image was peeking through the filmy first layer of pond water.

"Pictures of You," which became the fourth single from the album nearly a year later, played second. It was much longer than the version radio listeners would eventually come to know: a seven-and-a-half minute pop song bridging together the introduction with the drum-heavy "Closedown." "Lovesong" followed, which immediately tied "Fascination Street" as my then-current favorite Cure song. Where "Fascination Street," was desperate and slightly seedy, the song that formed my earliest imagined pictures of nightclubs, "Lovesong" was tender and romantic without sounding cheesy. Common knowledge amongst Cure fans holds that "Lovesong" was Robert's wedding present to Mary and that single snip of information helped form my image of Robert Smith. That he could write a song for his wife, release it, and have it become a huge hit, one of those songs that is immediately associated with The Cure (even though 311 had to go and cover it years later) was the apex of true romance. Robert Smith was God and there was nothing more to the discussion than that.

But there was always more to The Cure than Robert Smith and nowhere is that more evident than on *Disintegration*. The album featured what many would consider to be the definitive Cure lineup. Simon Gallup, the band's longest-standing member outside of Robert Smith, became one of my bass gods after the release of this album, with his dense riffs seeping through the speakers. Meanwhile, drummer Boris Williams unleashed a series of thunderous rolls that felt intrinsically tied to the stormy nights mentioned in song after song as guitarist Porl Thompson and keyboardist Roger O'Donnell added to the album's dark atmosphere. (Although I have heard what founding member Lol Tolhurst's "other instruments" credit really means, I don't have enough documentation to mention it here.)



Illustration by Mitch Clem

*Disintegration* wasn't just a moody Cure record. The album hit like the greatest of Southern California February storms. It was dark skies and downpours giving way to flooded streets that kept you housebound for days at a time. It came from out of nowhere with a sound encompassing the whole of the bedroom, forcing those of us who listened to admit that we had never heard anything this intense, this forceful in our young lives.

My attachment to *Disintegration* only grew over time. I would listen to it when I couldn't fall asleep, sometimes pressing headphones against me like tight-fitting earmuffs so that I could attempt to pick up every layer of production. I listened for the sound effects, how the rainfall on "The Same Deep Water as You" picked up on the

lyrics from the preceding track, "Prayers for Rain." The more I listened, the more I would catch on to some nuance within the song that I could have sworn I never heard before. Even today, seventeen years after its release, *Disintegration* still feels like superficially explored terrain, as though there is something that, as a listener, I am still missing.

*Disintegration* remains part of an extremely elite group of albums that I can only listen to from start to finish (the other members being Soft Cell's *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret* and Depeche Mode's *Black Celebration*). Sometimes I listen just to relish in the continuity of the track listing, how even the pop hits featured lengthy introductions that make for a seamless blend

throughout the course of the album. I listen to the way the songs following "Fascination Street," the second side of the cassette and vinyl, grow increasingly more vulnerable, the way the vocals cling to heartache as the music forms an incredibly fragile web. When the final notes of "Untitled" trickle down as the album comes to a close, it feels like a French film. There is no happy ending and you, the listener, have now acquired the burden of spending the next few hours contemplating every line you overheard on this album. That is a feat that few albums will ever achieve.

—Liz Ohanesian





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IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE I'VE DONE THIS, SO HERE'S A LIST OF

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# LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**"It was like sitting on a meeting of Incest Anonymous ('Hi, my name is Kent and I'm marrying my sister')"**

## DEPUTY FOR A DAY

It's not every day that your tattoo artist asks you to marry him.

I was driving through downtown to Union Station when he called to ask me. Dave had left me a cryptic voice mail message a few days before and we'd been playing phone tag ever since, so he didn't beat around the bush, he just blurted it right out. I was shocked.

Dave is one of my oldest friends in Los Angeles. In the ten years I've known him, I've never seen him angry or upset, even after I crashed his motorcycle into an elementary school fence. We'd worked together at a coffee shop and he's spent hours tattooing mermaids, anchors, and shamrocks onto my skin. Dave's one of those people who seems to have only one speed. Nothing gets him overly excited; nothing knocks him in the creek. He's easily the mellowest, most even-keeled person I know. I was honored, flattered, humbled, and a little confused, but I said yes. Of course I said yes. Who wouldn't say yes to a swell guy like Dave?

I should probably explain that Dave wasn't asking for my hand in marriage. He was asking if I'd serve as the officiant at his wedding to his fiancée, Angelina. I'm not a minister or a reverend and have no intention of becoming one (hence my confusion), but Dave had discovered this loophole in the California legal system where you can nominate someone to legally marry you. All I had to do was wait for a letter to come in the mail.

"Then what?" I asked.

"When the letter comes, call the number and make an appointment to take a class."

"That's it?"

"Yep, just go to the class and they'll swear you in as a Deputy Commissioner of Civil Marriages."

"Really?"

"Really."

"And it's legit?"

"Totally."

I thought it over.

"Will I get a badge?" I asked.

"I doubt it," Dave said, "but I can make one for you if you really want."

Deputy Commissioner of Civil Marriages. It had a nice ring to it, like Justice of the Peace, but that wasn't the important part: it was the power that mattered most. I would

be like a sea captain or a priest. I thought of all the people I could marry, maybe put an ad in the paper, turn it into a side business, put it onto my business card. I'd never thought about marrying anyone before, but now it was all I could think about.

But there was a catch—of course there was a catch, there's always a catch—I'd only be a deputy for a day and the only people I could marry were Dave and Angelina. Still, I figured being a deputy for a day was better than not being a deputy at all.

The letter turned up in my mailbox a few days later, just like Dave said. The appointments were held once a week on Wednesday at 11:30 in the morning in Norwalk. I didn't have much time. Dave's bride was in a family way and the wedding was scheduled to take place in a month. I booked the first appointment that was available and on the following Wednesday headed south on the 5 freeway.

There were eleven people seated around the table of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room of the Registrar-Recorder County Clerk's Office on Imperial Highway in Norwalk. Nine men, two women. Guests sat on chairs pushed up against the off-white walls. The California seal next to the door was out of date.

Celia Magat, a diminutive Filipina with the extravagant title Head, Birth, Death & Marriage Records Department introduced herself and told us all kinds of interesting facts about the Norwalk facility. For instance, did you know that Los Angeles County issues over 800,000 birth and death certificates a year? Los Angeles issues more birth and death certificates each year than there are people walking around in the entire state of Wyoming. And they're all issued through the Norwalk facility.

Celia gave us the run down on how everything worked. She quietly explained in her sing-song voice what paperwork we needed to fill out in order to make the marriage legal. She gave us suggestions on how to perform the ceremony and passed out a packet of photocopies with a ready-made fill-in-the-blank ceremony.

*We are gathered here this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ to witness \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in matrimony.*

While completing the paperwork, we introduced ourselves and revealed who we were marrying. It was like sitting on a meeting of Incest Anonymous ("Hi, my name is Kent and I'm marrying my sister"), but you could tell the deputies-to-be liked saying it. I know I did. I'd been springing the news on my friends for weeks, taking pleasure in their confusion when I announced that I was marrying my tattoo artist; but everyone in Room 5001A was in on the joke.

In fact, a dude with a tattoo peeking out of the collar of his jacket looked up from his paperwork and asked where I got my work done. It turns out he used to work in a North Hollywood bar on Lankershim Boulevard, just down the street from the Graffiti Palace where Dave works. He didn't know Dave, but he knew the shop, and the woman who'd accompanied him to the swearing-in ceremony had gotten her work done by Abel, Dave's co-worker.

When our paperwork was complete, Ceila told us to raise our right hands and repeat after her, which we did.

"You're in the Army now," she joked and everybody laughed. A stint in the service lasts years, but a Deputy Commissioner of Civil Marriages is vested with the authority of the state of California for considerably less, which is why they didn't give us badges or certificates—at least that's what Ceila told me.

"Your name will be on the document that legally binds two people together," Ceila said, "that should be enough."

And it was. Driving home I felt different, changed somehow. Even though I technically wouldn't become a Deputy Commissioner of Civil Marriages until the day of the ceremony, I didn't feel like an ordinary civilian anymore. I almost hoped that I'd see an accident on the side of the road or, even better, witness a crime in progress so I could pull over and announce that a Deputy Commissioner of Civil Marriages was on the scene and everything was under control.

I started planning the wedding ceremony right away. I figured I needed two things: a script and an outfit. The words were the easy part. I figured that once I met with Dave and Angelina and talked to them about what they wanted, the words would come. The outfit was trickier. What do you wear



Congratulations Dave and Angelina

Dave even  
pogoed  
around the  
yard while  
his dogs  
howled their  
approval.  
I may be a  
little  
biased, but  
it was one  
of the best  
weddings  
I've ever  
been to.

to a wedding when you're the officiant? I wanted an outfit that bespoke the authority of my position, something that would assure Dave and Angelina's family and friends that I knew what the hell I was doing. In other words, I wanted an outfit that befitted my title so that when I walked in everyone would know that I wasn't just another guest, but I didn't want to be mistaken for a caterer either. A priest's collar was out of the question. Ditto a fancy robe. Eventually, I settled on an old yachting cap. In old days, sea captains had the authority to conduct marriages onboard their vessels, and that was good enough for me. I added a black *guayabera* and white Dickies to complete the ensemble.

I met with Dave and Angelina to discuss logistics. When it came to the vows, neither had quite worked out what they wanted to say. I told them to keep it short, as they likely would feel overwhelmed once the awesomeness of the undertaking sunk in.

A few days before the wedding, I composed the ceremony on my computer, printed it out, and taped it into the kind of small, leather-bound book I imagined a Druid would use to keep his love spells. I was ready to do some hitching.

Dave and Angelina's house in Pasadena has a huge fenced-in backyard exploding with Calla lilies and equipped with a well-stocked koi pond, which makes an awful lot of sense for a tattoo artist. A trellis of flowers was set up in the back and there were chairs for a hundred guests. The parents would be pleased.

But make no mistake about it: this was a punk rock wedding. The bartender had two black eyes. The Razorcake familia was out in force. Todd was the best man. Sean and Felizon drove down from Ventura. Chris was nattily dressed in a three-piece brown

suit that matched his beard. Even though there was an open bar, we all nipped whiskey from a silver flask filled with Irish whiskey.

The couple looked especially happy. Angelina was dressed in a simple, but elegant, silk dress. Dave wore crisp blue Dickies and a matching jacket with "Don't Gamble with Love" inked onto the back. The tattoos on his skull looked especially shiny.

The ceremony was about to start. Dave and I stood before the trellis. He was nervous and I couldn't give him the flask because everyone was looking at us. So I started talking to him about something completely inane.

"I know what you're doing," he said.

"What?"

"You're trying to distract me so I won't be nervous."

"That's what I'm supposed to do. It's my job."

"Where were you three hours ago?"

"Don't worry," I said. "Everything will be fine. In a few minutes—"

"Could you not talk," Dave interrupted, "I'm trying to memorize my vows."

Ten or so years ago, Dave gave me a tattoo on my back. He was raw and inexperienced, still an apprentice really. He had practiced by tattooing eyeballs on his feet and then an ex-con in the halfway house up the street let Dave cover up his swastikas. I was one of his first paying customers. But did I tell him to shut up when he was doing his thing for the first time?

Angelina's sister gave the signal that the bride was ready and I began the ceremony. I followed my own advice and kept it simple. A little light humor to break the ice, some nice words about Dave and Angelina to get the water works going, and then the main event.

The bride and groom, however, did not follow my advice. Instead of uttering a few heartfelt but quick words, they launched into these long monologues about how they met (eHarmony.com), how their first date went (not well), how different they were (night and day). Yet from the very beginning, they both knew that they'd met The One. The words I'd so carefully composed were completely overshadowed by the eloquent expressions of love by the bride and groom, and that's exactly how it should be. If the purpose of a wedding ceremony is to bear witness, as the Deputy Commish, I had the best seat in the yard, and it was awesome and intense. This was the only part of the ceremony I wasn't prepared for, but it left the deepest impression.

The celebration started immediately afterwards with Dave and Angelina toasting each other's health and happiness with shots of Jack Daniels and apple juice, respectively. There was eating and drinking and dancing and lots of loud music. Dave even pogoed around the yard while his dogs howled their approval. I may be a little biased, but it was one of the best weddings I've ever been to.

A little less than three months after Dave and Angelina got married, they welcomed their first child, Michael Arthur Guthrie, into the world on July 25, 2006. (Dave, apparently, does have more than one speed after all.) There's an Irish expression that holds, "A meeting at a wedding is the making of another," and while I didn't meet that special someone at Dave's wedding, my experience as officiant inspired me to follow in Dave's footsteps: I'm going to ask Mario, my favorite bartender, to marry me.



—Jim Ruland

RAZORCAKE 9





## SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

**"It's interesting to see the love affair with selling one's rock'n'roll soul."**

# Good Television, BAD IDEA

If there's a party this year for *Monday Night Football*, you won't find it at my house, because I don't have cable or satellite television. That's right. I only have the free channels—only really free if the electric bill stated zero—but everyone has to pay for that. Since I only have these channels, I tend not to be bored by television that much. On certain nights of the week, I sit and let my mind drift, usually to sleep on the couch before anything ever reaches my eyes. There is one show that I intently watch, and that is *Rock Star Supernova*. It is interesting to see the love affair with selling one's rock'n'roll soul.

Last year, the band was INXS and the last I saw of them was a billing to play an Indian casino in Indio, California. I think that all this rock star stuff is put together by Dave Navarro, who usually sits on his throne like a kid wanting to learn zilch in a math class. The band *Supernova* consists of Gilby Clarke, Jason Newsted, and Tommy Lee. Well, I guess if you're going to have a rock band, the guys from Guns'n'Roses, Metallica, and Mötley Crüe would be the way to go.

Here's my take on the show: it's a train wreck and I love the horror of flying bodies. First off, let me tell you, years ago I listened to these guys. Hell, I even went to a Guns'n'Roses show in Pasadena. Here's the story: my friend Jeff tells me if I drive out to Pasadena, he can get us into the show for free. Free is good. Well, first off, the guy at the back door who let us in is Big Frank Harrison. It was my first meeting with the man from Goldenvoice and I just about peed my pants. Jeff didn't tell me to look for him. Anyway, we had to do a little work unloading the equipment for Junkyard in order to get a seat. Thanks, Frank! So while we're unloading, Axl Rose, while prancing around with one spur on, was spewing crap because something wasn't right in his dressing room. Oh, the noise that one spur makes. This was all in GNR's heyday, and I don't remember Gilby Clarke being part of it.

I was never into Metallica, but I've found that Jason Newsted is not an original member either, which leaves us with that sweet simpleton Tommy Lee. I remember taking my brother's car and going to Tower Records to obtain a Crüe tape when I was really supposed to only go to basketball practice. Up until he reads this sentence

right here, he previously only knew I went somewhere, just not what for.

So that's the band. Now let me tell about the show.

The contestants who are looking to be the rock star, for the most part, don't look the part, and run in age from young to close—close meaning near to the age of the guys in the band. Right now, I'm partial to this girl Zayra, and basically it's because she coked the guys by saying in a roundabout way that they're dinosaurs. I believe that when asked, "Do you even own any record that any of us have ever been on?" she replied, "Baby, I was wearing diapers when that was out." Come on, that's so right on and gut-crunching funny that I play it over and over. Many of the contestants look like they should be in a grunge band, not a rock band. Hell, a couple look death metal. One of the front runners looks like Clint Howard: you know, the guy from the classic B-movie *Ice Cream Man*.

Now the part that somewhat confuses me is, that knowing the bands and the music these guys are into (that is, if you weren't in diapers), wouldn't you sing songs from that timeframe? I would think some Ratt, Poison, Black Sabbath, or even some Who might be some good choices. These guys are in their mid-forties, and since I'm in that same ball park, I would think these guys would lean to the oldies. Sheez, I can't believe I said that. The only time I saw a current song work was last year when this guy beefed up a Britney Spears tune. Yes, that is hair standing up on my arms, but it really was good.

I will admit that my hatred for Dave Navarro grows with each week I tune in. This guy is so pompous for an individual who, before he married Carmen Electra, was an "Oh, yeah. That guy." The other night he told this girl that she does the same thing every time and that she needed to change things up. This prompted the girl to ask if he had the same routine when he played, to which he replied: "The difference is I have a job and I'm not auditioning." So if he was, would he cut that silly beard and so-called moustache off and rock out in spandex? I don't think so.

This show is so not about rock'n'roll, but about how to make some money—which these guys already have an overabundance

of anyway—except for Tommy, who, bless his soul (what's left of it), is in it for the girls. I even went as far as the internet to see what others had to say about this show and I found a blog from Navarro himself trying to defend his show as not being scripted. Yet, if one watches carefully, the same responses are used when judging contestants. Navarro states that people don't really see all the time responding to contestants' performances or the time spent in huddle deciding on a performer's fate, because so much is cut to make the time slot. I find this hard to believe because, most importantly, it's television and that's how things work. Secondly, they have a good idea from show number one who the top three or four people are and it's just a matter of weeding out. I personally have a scary feeling that this could happen to punk if the right money hound were to back it. Someday, I could be watching *Punk Star Dead Kennedys: Who Wants to Front the Band?* Good television, bad idea. So as you can see this show is a train wreck, it takes rock and runs it right off the tracks.

### UNDERPANTING

\$2, By Matt Wiegles

There is something about small comics that always ups my anticipation; something about good things coming in small packages. Let me just say that *Underpanting* is one of those good things. The actual story is "The Devil's Underpants" and if you thumb through a few pages, you'll probably think to yourself that the Devil has a lot of time on his hands. Of course, that is true. It seems the real reason some historic figures lost their life or hard times befell on them was because of a pair of polka dotted shorts. No one will try "Atomic Wedgies" after browsing through this comic, because the underpants can take care of anybody. This little dude of a comic is just the right amount of two-minute escape reading a person needs to do, and chuckling to themselves for hours after. (Partyka, c/o Matt Wiegles, PO Box 448, NY, NY 10018)

### AMERIKAN SPLENDOR, MY AFFAIR YEAR

Stamps or trade, By John Piche & D. Buu

This is a strange tale of an egocentric comic book writer who haunts the local library to obtain reviews and articles about his



Photo by Kris Tripplaar

**This is one of those comics you want to drop in little kids' pillow cases on Halloween because you know if they read it they won't be going to bed for awhile.**

writing. He also has this infatuation with getting the information from a young girl who works at the library. This book is almost uncomfortable to read. I get the feeling the old guy is almost stalking the girl. He gives her copies of his books and signs them, and the way he talks to her is almost juvenile, yet she seems unfazed by this guy and seems to care about his feelings. Things really seem weird when he claims that his wife criticizes everything he does, and that all she does is take vacations without him. I really don't know how I feel about this one. The story is written so well that I feel that I'm at the library, yet I get this creepy vibe, like this is normal in society but, at the same time, it's just wrong. I'm not sure if this is based on real events, but judging by the introduction it may just be, and if this is the case, I now know why I feel like I'm watching things take place. This is a cool book if you like not knowing if a comic is separated from reality. (Love Bunni Press, 2622 Princeton Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, [www.lovebunnypress.com](http://www.lovebunnypress.com))

#### **GORESHITDEATH**

\$4.00 U.S., By various writers

Before setting out on your own in these pages, please read the introduction first. You'll find out why exactly these guys don't hold back on the gore and mayhem. You can't blame a

guy when he tells you from the get go that no one is going to get out alive. There are no feel good storylines in this pulp. Right from the start, we see blood and guts. It's like *Aliens* only no one survives. My favorite in this book is the story "Half Gay." It's built on the "is the glass half full? theory" and is about a fat guy who starts eating himself then tries to rationalize that he's still half alive. The answer to that will make way too much sense when you read it. This is one of those comics you want to drop in little kids' pillow cases on Halloween because you know if they read it they won't be going to bed for awhile. If this thing ever gets color graphics, we're all in for a treat. (Jose Angeles, 971 Sandra Court, Apt. 2, South SF, CA 94080, [joseangeles@muchomail.com](mailto:joseangeles@muchomail.com))

#### **BARRELHOUSE #2, PUS DRUNK**

\$2.00 U.S., By R. Lee & Dug Belan

Judging by the cover, I was sure someone was going to get killed, but the story took an unforeseen turn and dodged the death card. Actually, this is a well done story of neurosis and control. Strangely enough, the neurotic behavior is not caused by the job but some other occurrence. This guy is so far gone that he sees his employer—who, by the way, seems very cool—as a likeness to John Wayne Gacy. See, this guy works

on a landscape crew and he doesn't get along with anybody because he's always mumbling profanities about things that piss him off. In fact, one guy breaks his jaw because he can't take hearing the shit anymore, and the painkillers they give him don't help either. The weird part is that the wacko himself narrates it and he seems quite lucid in describing his madness. This was a fascinating read because, like I stated earlier, I thought someone was going to get killed, based on the art and the deepening of the characters madness. It's like reading a modern day Poe story. Fascinating book. (R. Lee, PO Box 1421 Oshkosh, WI 54903)

#### **A.D.D. COMICS #2**

\$3.00 U.S.

Riverrats Press puts out this one. I've received some outstandingly funny stuff from them before, but this one is sub par. It has a political agenda but it is so difficult to move through that I got tired and started flipping through the pages, looking for some artwork. One strip is called the Etheraeal World. They help me out by telling me its purgatory. Thanks. Boy, I'd have never got that one. Anyway, all it is are the ramblings of Elvis, Jim Morrison, Left Eye Lopez, and Princess Diana. Now, do you see why this one sucks? (Riverrats Press, PO Box 9833, Fall River, MA 02720)







## MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADYDZIE

**"I swear I was in a staring contest with my blind massage lady."**

# Chinkees in Chinaland

Booty hip hop has a soft spot in my lil' yellow heart. It's infectious and throbbing beats, perfectly sequenced samples, and unapologetic MC hustle shakes my ass like the most banger earthquake. And I only had to get on the other side of Earth, to land in Changsha, China, to rekindle my love affair with the ridiculousness of bling.

Ridiculousness is the overwhelming theme of my young life. In a celebration of absurdity, I have a brick red pitchfork tattooed up my asscrack. To this day, it remains my most favorite image permanently inked into my skin. It's this type of willingness to inflict nonsense on myself that has brought me to China, ostensibly to teach oral English to a small percentage of 1.3 billion Chinese folks for the next year.

I am already missing PBR and Sparks and the folks who used to drink them with me.

It's always a self-conscious exercise when I have beer with a new group of people, explaining to them that I will turn bright pink after a single beer and that doesn't mean that I'm a lightweight nor am I drunk—it's just that I'm missing a digestive enzyme and alcohol makes blood rush to the surface of my skin. Some call it the "Asian glow," and I suppose if I were to blush brightly anywhere in the world, I ought to feel right at home glowing with a billion other folks.

Changsha is the capitol city of the Hunan province, which is famous for its tongue-burning peppers. This makes eating meals an interesting game of lunch roulette: "Will this dish have me breathing fire and kill all of my taste buds?" The best defense against an ultra-spicy offense is beer (pi jiu). Luckily, a large bottle of cheap beer is less than fifty cents. A four-dollar pitcher can't beat that, especially when you can score an hour-long body massage by a blind

masseuse for the same cost. I've treated myself to one of these heavenly massages and I swear I was in a staring contest with my blind massage lady.

On my first night alone, away from our group of volunteer English teachers, I strolled through the thick, palpable humidity on a long main street in search of dinner.

I passed a man peddling noodles and scrunched my nose when I inhaled what smelled like an open sewer. I thought that it was peculiar that a street vendor would pick such an unfortunate location to pimp his culinary creations. But when I looked closely I realized that it wasn't a nearby trash pile emitting the stench, instead it was coming from the food cart and it began to smell appetizing.

Even with my mediocre Mandarin, I was able to ask for a bowl of noodles (mian tiao) and an order of small, black squares of deep-fried, stinky tofu (chou dou fu), the source of the offensive odor. After scooping my dinner into two small plastic bowls, the vendor man motioned me to have a seat on the sidewalk to enjoy his street cuisine. He pointed at a long and low stocking dolly in front of an adjacent store and pulled up a small stool for my table. I plunked down and began shoveling perfectly seasoned oily noodles into my mouth and people-watched the passerbys, mostly middle-aged men and their shirtless honey-colored torsos.

It was bizarre to think that just a week before I was at an In-N-Out drive-thru with my mom, hollering our order of burgers and fries into a white box. Mom was so hungry that she nearly inhaled her entire burger before we got home. She also asked, "What's the difference between a hamburger and a cheeseburger?" The woman's only been in America for twenty-eight years. Some things just remain a mystery, even when you've spent almost three decades buying cheeseburgers for your kids.

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I am thankful that China is full of Chinese. For the first time in my life I feel like I'm normal sized. My feet reach the floor when I sit down and I am sometimes the tallest person in line at the market. The anonymity of being just another Chinese is comforting and nerve-racking.

Before leaving the States, my dad left me with many bits of wisdom like, "And when you walk on the street and the China people they drive and they don't care about people. You have to be safety. It's not like here."

Crossing large intersections where traffic signals seem like mere suggestions; the notion of a right-of-way is lost in translation. If I'm lucky I can huddle with a family about to cross—I become ensconced in their tribe and their intuitive ability to navigate through passing cars and mopeds—as opposed to fearing for my life as buses weave around me just inches from my body. I'm gonna feel sorry for the poor bastard who may run over my feet someday because the fines for injuring a foreigner are doubled and he probably figured that he just bumped into another Chinese schmoe.

In high school I was called a *Twinkie*—yellow on the outside and white on the inside. Most Chinese folks have never tasted the sweet preservatives of Twinkies and in their eyes I'm yellow all the way through—until I open my mouth.

It really hasn't sunk in that I'll be here for another year, eating steamed buns for breakfast rather than frosted mini-wheats. I'm going to miss my mommy and the next season of *America's Next Top Model*. And I'm tired.

I've sweated gallons from the overwhelming heat and exhausted by the hectic orientation schedule. Acclimating to



I realized that it wasn't a nearby trash pile emitting the stench, instead it was coming from the food cart and it began to smell appetizing.

trough-like squatty potties is a small ordeal in of itself.

My brain is being saturated with Chinese and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) classes. We're being groomed to be super awesome happy time English teacher and it's tougher than it sounds.

On average, we'll be teaching sixteen classes of sixty to seventy kids each week—that's about a thousand students relying on us to get their English on. Hella responsibility.

I'll try not to say "hella" in class, but I can't promise I won't play Hella for them.

I wonder if my students will get it if I played Mitch Hedberg for them? Like, "I was gonna have my teeth whitened, but I said 'Fuck that, I'll just have a tan instead.'" If I take out the F-bomb, it could work.

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I'm no entomologist, but I'm of the opinion that Chinese bugs have gnarlier venom than their American counterparts. After only five days in Changsha, I've been blessed with a dozen bug bites on my legs alone. The bites range from the pedestrian, dime-sized pink dots to an inflamed red lump resembling a small, fiery tumor at the side of my thigh that continues to become increasingly itchy. I'm guessing that either my flesh is hella tasty or I need my bed sheets changed. The only thing that'll get my mind off these swollen wounds is Kanye West's "Gold Digger."

It's difficult not to bop my head to its loopy beats with a story that begins with Kanye declaring:

*Now I ain't sayin' she a gold digga  
But she ain't messin' with  
no broke niggas  
Get down girl,  
go ahead get down*

The sur/reality of blasting, "If you fuckin' with this girl, then you better get paid" in south central China does not escape me. And it makes me wanna booty dance.

I wonder if "Gold Digger" is a karaoke option around these parts.

—Amy Adoyzie



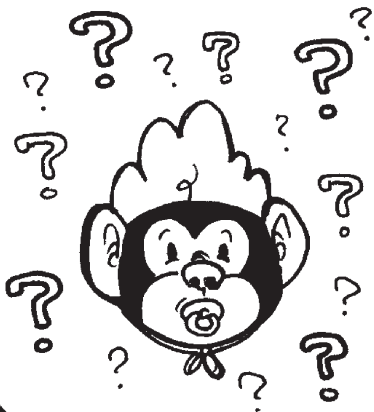




CHICO  
SIMIO  
No 1

ART. 06

LIKE MOST OF US, I DON'T  
REMEMBER EVER BEING  
A BABY.



I ASSUME I WAS WELL TAKEN  
CARE OF AND FED REGULARLY  
BECAUSE I GREW INTO A DIRTY,  
SWEATY, LITTLE CHANGO.



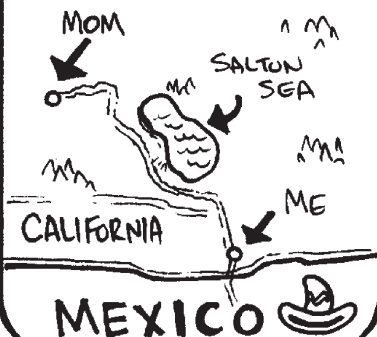
I WAS LEFT WITH MY NANA IN  
CALEXICO WHEN I WAS STILL A  
BABY. "LEFT" BEING A NICER WORD  
THAN "ABANDONED."

HOW LONG  
ARE YOU LEAVING  
HIM HERE?

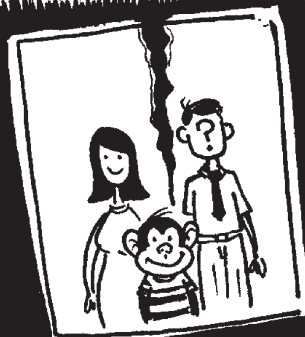
I... DON'T  
KNOW.



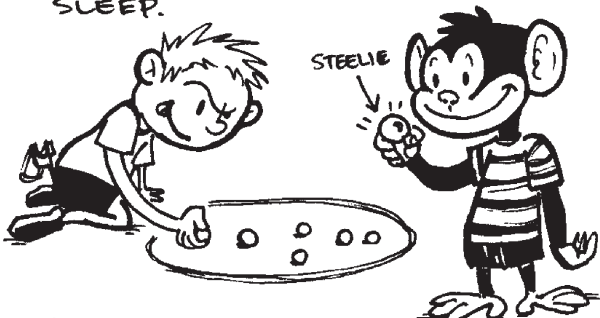
MY MOTHER WENT BACK  
TO LOS ANGELES TO  
WORK AND I HAD THE  
HONOR OF STAYING IN  
THE IMPERIAL VALLEY.



MY "FATHER" I KNOW ZERO  
ABOUT, EXCEPT THAT HE  
LEFT WHEN HE FOUND OUT  
MY MOM WAS PREGNANT.



I THINK THAT MY CHILDHOOD WAS A HAPPY ONE FOR THE MOST PART. I GREW UP JUST LIKE  
EVERY OTHER CHANGUITO IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD. WE PLAYED IN ASSORTED DIRT LOTS,  
AMUSING OURSELVES WITH GAMES OF MARBLES OR JUST RACING OUR "BIG WHEELS" UP AND  
OFF THE SIDEWALKS. LATE AFTERNOONS WERE SPENT CATCHING TOADS AND INSECTS IN THE  
TALL GRASS FIELDS SURROUNDING OUR HOUSES. EVENINGS, THE CICADAS WOULD SING US TO  
SLEEP.



WE DIDN'T REALIZE IT  
AT THE TIME, BUT...



...WE WERE PRETTY  
LUCKY CHANGUITOS.



LOVE, NØRB

REV. NØRB

“i somehow think that work caused my Mohawk. It was a work-related injury, one might say.”

# AN-TI-SO-CIAL

or I GAVE MYSELF A MOHAWK ON THE EVE OF MY FORTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY WHILE LISTENING TO SKREWDRIVER AND NOW I NEED TO VERY QUICKLY WRITE A COLUMN ABOUT IT

Hmm. Yes. Yes i did. Looks sharp, too. Kinda gives me the landing strip effect, like some hot girl's crotch. Cripes, i'm so old i actually remember when pubic hair was fashionable! I'm Dirk Nowitski's jersey number! Wes Unseld's, too! How did this egregious and ever-widening blot on my permanent record happen? Where did i go wrong? (i'll tell you where i didn't go wrong: i finally figured out how to stop Microsoft Word™ from capitalizing all my lower case i's [sorry, Todd]. I realize that the ongoing theme of *Man vs. Word™* is hardly the stuff our mutant Viking offspring [note to world: *Word™* auto-capitalizes "Viking" but not "offspring"] will sing of around the post-nuclear bonfires, but it seems somehow relevant to Rocco's Modern Life, so why not chronicle the struggle in real-time?) *I can not incur this debt! Where's the gun, here's my head! And it feels like some hot stripper's bikini area!* I mean, fuckin'-a (now, *here's* a question for you all: Is it *fuckin'-a* or *fuckin'-A*? And is there a hyphen? No hyphen? Apostrophe? And what exactly is the "a" to which the "fuckin'" points? Is it perhaps the selfsame "a" of which our leader, Arthur Fonzarelli, spake?), getting old is for old people. I mean, the math is there. I don't see why i have to assume this fricking burden. *Get somebody else to do it!* Feh. Bah. Ach. P-tui. But, anyway, yes: i gave myself a Mohawk Tuesday night (note to world: *Word™* also auto-capitalizes "Mohawk." *Strangely, it yields no visible effect on the phrase "page boy"*). I'm not completely sure what i was thinking. Actually, scratch that: I *am* completely sure what i was thinking. It was something along the lines of **FUCK!!! AAUGH!!! AGH!!! ACK!!! IT'S HOT!!! IT'S HOT!!! I'M BURNING UP!!! BREATHING THE AIR IS LIKE INHALING SOME KINDA BOILING AIR-FLAVORED SOUP!!! MY HEAD IS SWEATING!!! MY HAIR IS A WET MOP**

**OF ILL-GROWED-OUT CRAP!!! I CAN'T TAKE IT NO MO'!!! I WORK NINE TO FIVE LIKE A CHUMP, WHICH ARE THE SAME HOURS AS MY BARBER WORKS!!! WITHOUT ACCESS TO HIS TONSORIAL MINISTRATIONS, MY ONCE SHAPELY AND ANGULAR FLAT TOP HAS DESCENDED INTO A FORMLESS MOP OF BROWNISH CRAP!!! HEAT, HUMIDITY, AND MID-SIZED INSECTS ARE BEING BOUND IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MY SCALP!!! THE HAIR MUST GO!!! THE HAIR MUST GO NOW!!! THE NINE-DOLLAR CLIPPERS MUST BE LOCATED AND ACTIVATED!!! A SLIGHT TRIM WILL BE JUST ENOUGH TO GET ME BY UNTIL MORE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE UNDERTAKEN!!! THE OFFENDING HAIR COMES OFF IN A QUICK AND CLEAN TORNADO OF FOLLICULAR OBLITERATION STARTING...NOW!!!** (sound of nine-dollar hair clippers hitting hair, tangling immediately, and stopping) **THE OFFENDING HAIR COMES OFF IN A QUICK AND CLEAN TORNADO OF FOLLICULAR OBLITERATION STARTING...NOW!!!** (repeat sound, but on other side of head) **THE OFFENDING HAIR COMES OFF IN A QUICK AND CLEAN TORNADO OF FOLLICULAR OBLITERATION STARTING...NOW!!!** (miscellaneous sputters and muted buzzes) After a few more minutes of jabbing at my head with my nine-dollar hair clippers, my formless mass of brown hair-crap was now a formless mass of brown hair-crap with a few small indentations in it here and there. The clippers worked just enough that they would chew up the first bit of hair they contacted, then clog and chew no more – i.e., they would do just enough damage to make me look like a fucking retard (word of apology here for the saucy argot...perhaps i should have used the word "Motard" or something), then stop. I'm not sure why i was at all surprised by this; this was the exact same thing that happened when i tried to cut my hair with the nine-dollar clippers a few Valentine's Days ago. But then, i was actually *trying* to give myself a Mohawk (i wish the Ho-Chunks had their own haircut. It'd be a lot more fun telling everybody that i

gave myself a Ho-Chunk than a Mohawk) (note to world, especially *Ho-Chunk Nation: Word™* auto-capitalizes "Mohawk" but not "ho-chunk." Take umbrage! Take very very umbrage!) (man...you got to wonder what kind of a world it is we live in where one's document processing software forces a capital "M" on "Mohawk" but lets you get away with gobbledygook like "take very very umbrage" with nary a whimper), simply for the Alternative™ Romance® of it all. This time, i just wanted a trim because my head was hot (i mean, seriously: *What the fuck was up with that heat wave?* I like hot weather and all, but when it's *boiling hot after sunset in Wisconsin* there is something terribly, terribly amiss [and, i suppose, if it's boiling hot after sunset in Pennsylvania there's something terribly, terribly Amish] *[ow! Stop hitting me!]*) (so, i mean, detour a second and think about that: The time i *tried* to give myself a mohawk, i couldn't [holy crap! *Word™* doesn't auto-capitalize "Mohawk" when it's in parentheses! But it apparently does when it's in brackets! *The mind reels!*]). The time i just wanted a trim, i wound up with a Mohawk. Apparently, misdirection is the key to all great feats of magic). So, yes: The short and long of it (somewhat literally, given the hairstyle in question) is that i hacked numerous small chunks (perhaps that is the "Ho-Chunk?") out of my hair, yielding a manifestly un-sexy "i got th' mangle" look. Damage control required me to use ever-smaller clipper attachments in the hopes of hacking the holes out of my hair, until, of course, i was down to just bare clipper, zipping and zapping away at the offending divots. When the smoke cleared, i found that i had (rather brutally) hacked away pretty much all the hair on the sides of my noggin, but had, in large part, ignored the top of my dome simply because that's the hardest spot to reach, therefore the part of the Norb-head terrain i had chopped the least holes in initially. Well, needless to say, when it's ten minutes to your Dirk Nowitski's birthday and you look in the mirror and realize that you've damn near given yourself a Mohawk by fucking *accident*, opportunity is knocking in a very real way, and it's time to blow off writing your column, put on the one Skrewdriver album that doesn't suck (i.e., the one where they didn't know they were Nazis yet, they



inflicted my Mohawk (which i have just now named Gervaise) (naming it “Jean Beauvoir” just seemed too poofy), my photo appeared in the local newspaper (which has happened a few times before), on the front page of the Business section (which hasn’t). I mean, not to put too fine a point on it, but *what the fuck?* I used to be in the goddamn *Entertainment* section, now i’m in the freaking *BUSINESS* section! *What gives, Jack? Who ordered up this screwy and distasteful state of affairs?* Ah, but leave us not get ahead of ourselves: After like fifteen years with the same day gig, i, Rev. Nørb, have a new job: I now design video games for a living (as far as i can tell) (and, okay, you’re saying *Gosh, Rev. Nørb, what exactly do you do when you design video games?* Well, Bobby, right now it appears that i come to the office with a Mohawk, and sit around all day pretending i’m trying to put white numerals where the yellow numerals are, while, in actuality, i secretly bang out my overdue *Razorcake* column instead. Thanks for asking) (P.S. You’ll find this hard to believe after my last column, but my pitch for making *Welcome To The Penisphere* was shot down! *Well i never!*). As a precondition to such employment, i thought it might be a nice idea to go back to school and actually *learn* something about making video games, especially since i don’t (okay, rarely) play the fucking things myself. I’m *AN-TI-PAC-MAN*, *AN-TI-PAC-MAN!!!* (hey, i just now realized that Negative Element’s “Anti Pac-Man” sounds kinda like “An-Ti-So-Cial” by Skrewdriver, which is the song i kept playing over and over whilst i was giving myself Gervaise. *Of course! It’s all so clear now! The mysteries of the universe revealed!* Given about another hour of typing this column two lines at a time interspersed with feigning scholarly contemplation of GUI markup language text controls, i’m sure i’ll have tied this all together with the auto-capitalization of “Mohawk” and other intrepid pursuits, life will have come full circle, and i will expire peacefully. Bury me in a Dirk

## i wish the Ho-Chunks had their own haircut.



just thought they were some sort of retarded version of the Who or Slade or something), finish your damn Mohawk and get drunk (and, yes, i realize that Skrewdriver and mohawks don’t have a damn thing in common, but that record just seemed appropriate somehow. I suppose i would have played an Exploited record instead, had they the distinction of, like Skrewdriver, actually having one record that doesn’t suck). So, yes: I am Wes Unseld years old, and have given

myself my first Mohawk, ever. My hair looks like something i won at the Webster Park penny carnival. I got up in the morning, put my Good ‘n’ Plenty™ pajamas on, and Mohawk in tow, went to work, trying to make sense of it all. See, the truth is that i somehow think that work caused my Mohawk. It was a work-related injury, one might say. I’m not sure how it happened, or where i go to fill out the workman’s comp forms, but it is likely not completely coincidental that the day before i

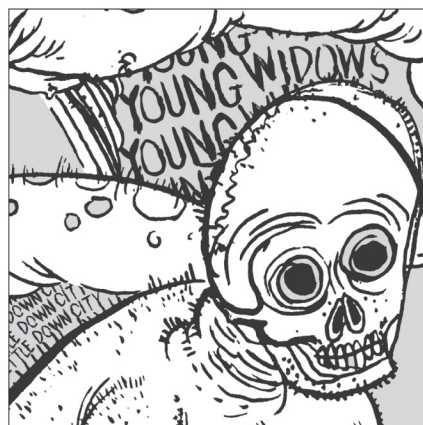
*now! The mysteries of the universe revealed!* Given about another hour of typing this column two lines at a time interspersed with feigning scholarly contemplation of GUI markup language text controls, i’m sure i’ll have tied this all together with the auto-capitalization of “Mohawk” and other intrepid pursuits, life will have come full circle, and i will expire peacefully. Bury me in a Dirk



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Nowitski jersey. Actually, make it a Wes Unseld—I don't want the fact that the Bucks traded the draft rights to Nowitski to the Mavericks for Robert "Tractor" Traylor to haunt me in the next life as well). Now, career advancement is all well and good, but this whole being a full-time student and full-time-worker deal has severely cut into my ability to **ROCK, DUDE**—which, in turn, has severely limited my ability to get my smiling, be-Gervaised face into the Entertainment section these days. On the other side of the coin (or similarly daring metaphor), my new employer—a videogame-makin' start-up company here in the Frozen Tundra—has been, at least for now, deemed newsworthy by the area's various movers 'n' shakers, thus explaining what the hell my face, pre-be-Gervaise-ification, was doing atop the Business section (THIS COLUMN IS REALLY FUCKING SUCKING. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THIS IS THE FIRST, LAST, AND

economic planning!). However, this is not the crux of my lamentation—not the Gervaise-inducing event that ultimately drove me mad—**MAD I TELL YOU!**—to the point where i hacked a Wattie into my head and showed up for work the next day in pajamas. No, the critical aspect of the Business section story that slowly (actually, somewhat quickly) ate away at my brain and impelled me to inflict the ultimate **"I'M STILL PUNK, DAMMIT!!!"** midlife crisis 'do upon myself was simply this: In reference to the video game company in which i am now gainfully employed (for how much longer if i continue writing columns on the job, i cannot rightfully say), i was, by virtue of my accelerated age, referred to as the "elder statesman." Let the god damn mother fucking son of a bitching record show that i am **NOT** the god damn mother fucking son of a etc. "elder statesman" of **ANYTHING GOD DAMN MOTHER ETC. VIDEO GAME RELATED, NOR**

level, adjust things to make it easier, and play the level again. Die every goddamn time. I hand the thing to my 19-year-old co-worker, and tell him to try it once. Bear in mind that he, unlike i, has *no idea* how the level is constructed. He is playing it sight unseen. He beats it in a minute, on his first try, with a score of something like 12,000 points. "*Too easy.*" Needless to say, the indignity of being such a goddamn **SHIT ASS PUKE FUCK** video game player that **I CAN'T EVEN BEAT MY OWN GOD DAMN LEVELS** coupled with the fact that i have given up like *three years of high-level punk rocking* to put myself in this position coupled with the fact that i am now being called some manner of video-game-related "elder statesman" in the god damn *business section* of the newspaper at the expense of doing something respectable like gallivanting across the country with deer antlers on my head has all rendered me **HOPELESSLY FUCKING INSANE**, but

## Does this require ME TAPING MY PENIS TO MY LEG so the other rugby dudes don't yank it off my body or something?



ONLY TIME I BLOW OFF WRITING MY COLUMN TO GIVE MYSELF A MOHAWK, AND THEN TRY TO SURREPTITIOUSLY BANG IT OUT AT WORK. Also, my boss just told me i'm going to be a "scrum leader" on our new project. *Scrum leader?* Does this require me taping my penis to my leg so the other rugby dudes don't yank it off my body or something?). This recent press, of course, provoked a certain period of soul-searching and breast-beating: *So i stopped being in bands and getting my picture in the entertainment section so i could go to school and get a job and get my picture in the BUSINESS section instead? What the fuck was i smoking?* I mean, that can't even reasonably be considered a *lateral* career move, can it? I mean, what could possibly be a less interesting section of the newspaper to appear in? Obituaries, i suppose, but other than that, *yeesh*. If you start out in the Entertainment section, after four years of school (or, in my case, three and counting) you oughtta wind up in the comics. At bare minimum, in the Jumble™ (if my name was an answer to a Jumble™ puzzle, i think the clue would be VORBERN. Actually, no, it would be VØRBERN. Actually, it wouldn't be either: Jumbles™ are always either five or six letters in length, so even this small dream is withheld from me). But no, these days i wind up with my face right next to the story about the chick who bought two Curves™ gymnasiums and the upcoming Sturgeon Bay Export-Import meeting. *BUT!* That's not the worst of it. I have essentially blown off punk rock for three years in order to become a video game designer—that's lamentable, but it's understandable, because punk rock doesn't pay the bills, nor should it (but, i mean, think about it: Fleecing the gamer kids instead of the punk rock kids for once in my life is healthy, safe, and sound

**WILL I EVER BE!!!** I can be the elder statesman of, say, Green Bay Punk Rock, if you're really looking for some aged golem to fill the position. But, regarding the whole video game thing, fuckin'-A, just because you're the oldest dude in the room doesn't make you the "elder statesman" (what's really sad is that i got a god damn year even elder two days later. Sheesh. *Does this variable know no upper bounds???*)! An "elder statesman" implies lifelong involvement, doesn't it??? Doesn't it??? An elder statesman is someone like Jimmy Stewart, or George Blanda, or Little Richard getting helped up onto his piano by his bodyguard or somebody. It's **NOT** some noob such as myself who's only into video games because it seemed like a cool way to earn a buck—some douchebag video game poseur who had never owned a friggin' game console in his life till i bought a five-dollar Super Nintendo™ at a rummage sale a few years ago. **I AM NOWHERE NEAR STATELY AND DISTINGUISHED ENOUGH TO BE AN ELDER STATESMAN!!! I FLATLY REFUSE TO EXECUTE MY DUTIES!!! DRUM ME OUTTA THE CORPS IF YOU MUST, BUT I SHALL NOT COP TO THIS FINAL INDIGNITY!!!** Plus, i mean, i fucking suck at video games. I spent an entire day meticulously laying out a prototype level for one of our projects. I measured out the jumps, plotted them, planned everything out, adjusted obstacles meticulously, and playtested the shit out of it. My criterion for a successful bare-bones level was that i get all the way thru it one time—*one time!*—without dying—bearing in mind, of course, that i created the level, and therefore know and *invented* the safe path to the end. I spent like four hours playing this fucking thing, and dying every time. And, after every couple deaths, i would go back into the

**NOT QUITE HOPELESSLY FUCKING INSANE ENOUGH** that the last remaining spark of sanity and decency within me failed to come to the following high truth, which is, at its root, what we in the biz call the "take away" of this whole mass of vowels, consonants, and hare-brained auto-correction; ergo and to wit:

**THERE IS NO MIDLIFE CRISIS WHATSOEVER THAT CANNOT BE SOLVED BY GIVING YOURSELF A MOHAWK AND COMING TO WORK IN YOUR PAJAMAS.**

You may, at need, refer to this as the "Rev Nørb Rule of Midlife Crisiï." I have given the matter a long and hard period of inspection (well, as long and hard as somebody born Wes Unseld/Dirk Nowitski years ago is apt to get these days), and i have come to the conclusion that the Rev. Nørb Rule of Midlife Crisiï is universally applicable in all situations, everywhere. *The Mohawk makes it good! The Mohawk makes it right! Wash away your sins in the HEALING POWER OF THE MIGHTY MOHAWK!!! NO MOHAWK, NO PEACE!!! KNOW MOHAWK, KNOW PEACE!!! (HIPPIE!!!)* There is, as always, one small but important exception to the rule: Giving yourself a Mohawk and coming to work in your pajamas will NOT help you deal with the fact that *you're the dude* who tried to overcome his midlife crisis by giving himself a Mohawk and coming to work in his pajamas.

That, my friends, is why God invented Pabst Blue Ribbon™.

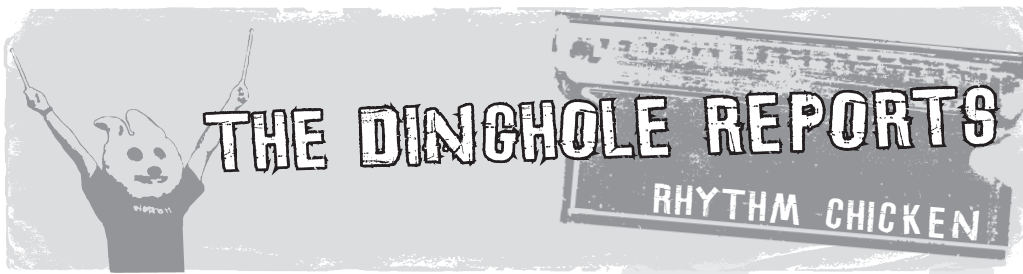
Love,

Nørb



RAZORCAKE 19





**"True parade punks reject any and all professionalism!"**

# Parade Trophies, Exploding Little Towns, <sup>and the</sup> Corn Dog Mosh!

The Dinghole Reports  
By the Rhythm Chicken  
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)  
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

Well, it's July 31st as I type this, and I can say with definite certainty that parade season is indeed upon us! For those of you who have been following my cluckings for any number of years, you know that summers spent in America mean one very exciting thing to this Rhythm Chicken: *parades*! Yeah, basement shows are fun. Playing in the ladies room of one rock venue or another is always a hoot. The occasional stadium gig in front of 30,000 sports fans is surely surreal. However, the one type of gig that holds a special place in my heart is playing in parades. I'm a bit surprised there isn't a whole new subculture in the punk scene of punks playing parades, parade punks!

The parade is such a great channel for bringing your music/message to the people! First of all, they aren't really expecting it, so you know you'll get their attention. No matter how bad you are, you can't help but to stand out amongst the little marching bands, waving politicians, and lackluster floats from the Lions Club or the Jaycees. There's always a few folks here or there in the crowd who are gonna run up and offer you beers. What's not to love?

(Hey, Chicken! What's with this "Exploding Little Towns" hooshwash? We've heard all this parade banter before. And what's a "corn dog mosh"? - F.F.)

So, I am currently living back in my old woodshed in Northern Wisconsin, just south of the quaint little town of Ellison Bay. For hundreds of years, Ellison Bay has had a general store (the Pioneer Store), a tavern, a cheap diner, a tourist info center, a few cottages, and some breathtaking shoreline views. Every summer Ellison Bay also has a festival named "Olde Ellison Bay Days." There are plenty of bratwurst stands, live music, a talent show, and a good Wisconsin dose of beer consumption. There's also a parade, and oh she's a doozy!

[Really, Mr. Chicken, this is all sounding a little too Normal Rockwell for the pages of *Razorcake*. Or are you trying to sell us on a vacation to Smellison Bay? - Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #73: Parade Ruckus in the Rain!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #375)

It was a Saturday morning in late June. Ruckus Thomas and I decided at the last minute to crash the parade in nearby Ellison Bay. Building a parade float is a lot easier if your standards are as low as mine. Thomas came over with his pickup truck. We loaded up my chickenkit, a 12'er of Pabst, and a few leftover posters from my last tour in Plock, Poland. I thought the posters in Polish would further confuse the unexpected small-town Wisconsinites. We arrived at the parade's preparation area and I started in on that 12'er.

You may remember from Dinghole Report #68 how my snare stand was stolen. Well, I was still without a snare stand, but a true parade punk always finds a bullshit answer to such problems. I brought along my trusty pickle bucket! An upside down pickle bucket with a healthy amount of duct tape will make a fine snare stand in a pinch! Things were rolling along in true Rhythm Chicken fashion.

I set up my ever-changing chickenkit in the back of Thomas' truck, taped up the Polish signs reading "Ptasia Grypa tour" and "Uwaga! Kurczakowa Grypa!," and continued partaking in the Pabst. When the 12'er was finished off, I opened up the empty Pabst box and taped it on the back of the truck, the final decoration on my grand float! True parade punks reject any and all professionalism!

Ruckus Thomas inched the last minute float to the parade's starting point. Just then the dark clouds overhead finally let loose. As soon as the parade started, so did the torrential downpour! Thick blankets of rain come down and I was soaked to the bone in seconds. All I could do was laugh and pursue the ridiculous parade to come. Thomas and Hojon The Dog were in the front of the truck, dry as could be, and laughing as well.

This particular parade usually has maybe three hundred to five hundred spectators. Today, the rain scared away all but maybe one hundred onlookers under umbrellas. As I pounded out my rained-out ruckus rhythms, water kept splashing up off my drums. To say it was a sloppy Chicken gig would be a gross understatement. There were a few small crowds of people near the Mink River Basin (the town tavern) and the Pioneer Store. They clapped and cheered. Of course, as soon as the parade was completed, that's when the rain stopped. On to the beer tent!

(Well, we can only hope that the rain gave that chicken head a little cleaning, eh? - F.F.)

Actually, the chicken head is looking a little less dirty, and the white shirt I was wearing now has brownish streaks flowing down from the neckline! Punk rock! The best part of the story, however, is what happened four days later while I was at my job. An older gentleman arrived at my place of employment asking for me by name. I was confused and started wondering what I had done wrong. Then he hands over to me a *huge trophy* and a check for fifty dollars! Apparently, I had won second place in the parade competition! He explained how he and the Ellison Bay Men's Club had such a difficult time tracking me down. They did internet searches from those Polish signs I had on the float that only led to Polish websites, which confused them further (as anticipated!). That same day, a local newspaper printed a photo of the Rhythm Chicken float from the parade. You can plainly see the pickle bucket snare stand and the Pabst box hanging off the tailgate! Punk rock! All night at work I would glance over at my trophy and just chuckle.

It's a wiggly world, for sure. How wiggly you ask? One week later, at 2:30 in the morning, this quaint and quiet little town exploded. I'm not talking about exploding with joy or festivities, or even with ruckus. I mean the town *blew up*! Apparently there was a propane leak which seeped down into the bedrock, spread, and then came back up through some cracks into at least three buildings. At this early hour, one cottage

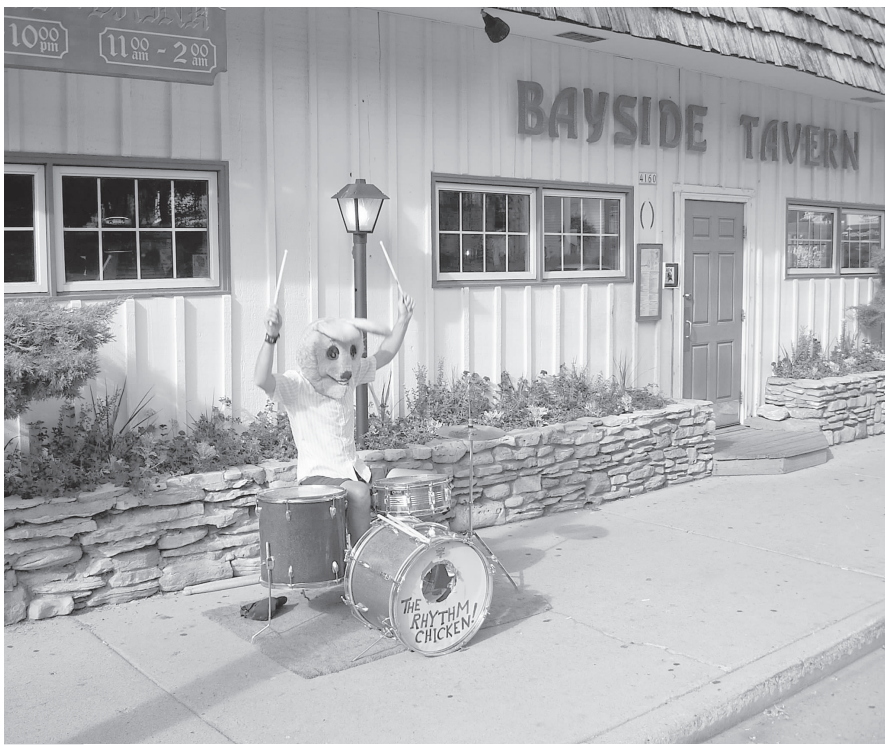


Photo by Ruckus Thomas

**After a moment or two of complete disbelief  
that they were being  
showered with corndogs,  
the crowd instantly went haywire...**

with a family in it, one maintenance garage, and the Pioneer Store just exploded. In a matter of seconds, half of downtown Ellison Bay collapsed and was gone. The town was evacuated and closed off for over a week. The feds were called in, the Red Cross, a thick swarm of state troopers, and a media blitz the likes of which such a small town has never seen. The explosions of Ellison Bay, WI, were on CNN all day. There were other pockets of propane down in the bedrock exploding periodically, creating the first ever reported mini-earthquakes in Ellison Bay. It's a wiggly world, for sure.

[The explosions of Ellison Bay are surely a tragedy, Mr. Chicken, but where does this "corn dog mosh" fit in? - Dr. S.]

Sooooooooo, just four days later I was heading south to Milwaukee. I had to perform in another parade! Whenever the Rhythm Chicken finds himself in America in mid-July, he simply *must* play in Milwaukee's South Shore Frolics parade. I arrived in brewtown the night before the parade and instantly partook in the glory of a greasy dinner at the Palomino. After numerous beers and a stop at the Cactus Club, I found myself with Ruckus O'Reily at the Palm Tavern. Near bar-time I almost got kicked out by Bruno for yelling out: "Ladies! We've got you surrounded! Come out with your

legs up!" That was my moment of drunken brilliance. Ruckus O'Reily's moment of drunken brilliance came when he told me he wanted to buy a shitload of mini-corndogs to throw from the Rhythm Chicken's float the next morning! Corndogs! Why did I never think of this?

Dinghole Report #74: Three Words...  
Corn Dog Mosh!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #376)

The morning of the parade I was running around Milwaukee's southside trying to pick up last-minute supplies: poster board, a big marker, and a 12'er of Pabst! I arrived at the meeting point to join up with the people from Rushmor Records, my float's official sponsor. There I started in on that 12'er of Pabst and started making Polish Chicken posters. I made one special poster to be held up to the crowd when my float inched past the crazy crowd outside of the Rushmor shop. It read "CORN DOG MOSH!"

Ruckus O'Reily showed up with a huge grocery bag and some odd news. Apparently he could find no *mini*-corndogs. He found only *full size corndogs*! Each full-sized corndog had a wooden stick handle coming out one end! This was going to be *great*! O'Reily and I kept emptying the 12'er of Pabst, only this time each empty can was duct taped to the side of the truck as decoratively as possible. I duct taped my trophy from the

Ellison Bay parade onto the top of my bass drum like a glorious hood ornament. Finally, I hung a sign off the truck's tailgate that read "In Memory of The Pioneer Store, Ellison Bay, WI." My float was now ready.

We inched up to the parade's starting point and continued finishing more Pabsts, then taping the empties to the sides of the truck. It was about ninety-five degrees and totally sunny, which is normal for this parade. I've done this parade five or six times, now, and it's always a scorcher. We eeked out into the parade route and I started my parade ruckus. Many folks along the parade route remembered me from previous years and yelled as loud as ever. Children jumped and screamed! Parents laughed! Ruckus O'Reily sat quietly on his stockpile of corndogs, smiling and waving.

A few blocks later we neared the corner where a few hundred drunk rockers were amassed outside of Rushmor Records. Ruckus tapped my shoulder, giving me the signal that the time was now. I totally let loose with the most chaotic chicken rhythms I knew. One of our helper ladies held up the Corn Dog Mosh sign, and Ruckus O'Reily began throwing the corndogs onto the stunned and screaming crowd! *They just went apeshit!* After a moment or two of complete disbelief that they were being showered with corndogs, the crowd instantly went haywire and upped the ante! They began throwing the corndogs back at us! Chaos! Corn dogs fights in a parade! All with a soundtrack of screams and Rhythm Chicken ruckus! As my float inched away from the corndog frenzy, I pulled out my ruckus logs and heard the Rushmor crowd scream even louder! *This is my punk rock!* A big thunderous Chicken cluck goes out to Ruckus O'Reily for inventing the first ever Corndog Mosh! Cluck!

(That's amazing, Chickenpants! Your ruckus knows no double! You are the Grand Marshal Of Ruckus! - F.F.)

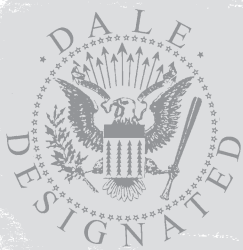
[Your recent ruckus-laden escapades are surely spectacular, Mr. Chicken. Now, when was the last time you stretched your dinghole? Are these not the Dinghole Reports? - Dr. S.]

My dinghole stretching is my *own* gol'dang business, Dr. Sicfart! Besides, I've got enough to worry about with my own woodshed possibly *exploding*! Last week I ran into Timebomb Tom in Green Bay. He instantly asked if my *ass* had anything to do with these explosions. I had to admit, it was a valid inquiry. If a meager propane leek can demolish half of my town, just think of what my terminally gaseous Chickenbutt can do! My Polish diet of cabbage-stuffed cabbage rolls with large amounts of cheap beer could very well spell the end of my beloved woodshed! Cluck, Cluck, Ka-Boom!

—Rhythm Chicken  
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com







I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

**"Shit the bed, man,  
it's the public that  
pays the entertain-  
ment folks'  
salaries, right?"**

# STAR WHORES

In a past issue of *Razorcake*, I did a piece on the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. This Hall, located in Cleveland OH, supposedly houses the who's who of the biggest movers and shakers in the history of rock'n'roll. Some of the induction choices I can whole-heartedly agree with and a whole lot of others left me scratching like a chimp with crabs, asking myself just what the hell the curators of this hall were thinking. The age-old saying of "taking the good with the bad" doesn't (and should never) apply here. Great artists and/or bands are just that: great. And by falling under this category, it's an unconditional earned right these types possess to be recognized amongst their peers. But alas, the Hall in Cleveland invokes the good-with-the-bad rule, showcasing moments of shame to be carried like a rotting albatross around one's neck.

Examples: Chuck Berry and the Ramones? Fame. The Grateful Dead and Steely Dan? Shame. Shift your attention west from Cleveland to Los Angeles. No hallowed Hall of glass to hurl rocks through here, but a "Hollywood Walk of Fame" that stretches down city sidewalks located on parts of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street. You know what I'm talking about—those charcoal-tone squares paved into the sidewalks with pink and black terrazzo stars and brass-inlaid names, depicting certain celebrities (and I use the term "celebrity" loosely here) for their achievements in the industry. Is this so-called "Walk of Fame" accurate? Do I sound a bit too fucking sarcastic? Read on and check it out for yourselves, but first a little background on how this hoopla came to fruition.

In 1958, some Los Angeles bigwigs saw fit to give Hollywood a brushing up, something the city's been trying to do for some years now. (Don't even get me started on the lame excuse for Times Square on Hollywood and Highland. Those jumbo screens stick out like a ridiculous sore thumb.) Artist Oliver Weismuller was commissioned by the Lost Angels honchos to create a living monument to those who served in the entertainment business, thus his idea for a walk of fame.

How did someone in the biz get a chance to covet a star? They had to (and are still supposed to, but sometimes don't)

fall under five specific categories of service in the industry. Depending what category they fall under, a brass icon inlay on their star designates which category the inductee has been awarded for: 1.) A phonograph record icon for contribution to the recording industry. 2.) A television set icon for service to the broadcast television industry. 3.) A motion picture camera icon for service to the film industry. 4.) A radio microphone icon for service to the broadcast radio industry. 5.) Comedy/tragedy masks icon for service to live theater. Gene Autry is the only one who has all five icons on his star, supposedly. That was before my time of Gene's off-Broadway performance of *Camelot*, or whatever. Maybe he played a flamboyant guard in tights. Maybe he doubled up with The Three Stooges' Moe Howard in a horse costume during a scene. Maybe I don't care. But it's more than industry contributions that allocate someone having their name in brass on the ground in Tinseltown. Here are FAQs taken from the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce website [www.hollywoodchamber.net](http://www.hollywoodchamber.net) regarding possible star inductees. They, like the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame rules, sound very similar:

**Q:** Who can do the nominating?

**A:** Anyone, including a fan, can nominate a celebrity as long as the celebrity or his/her management is in agreement with the nomination. If there is no letter of agreement included from the celebrity or his/her representative, the committee will not accept the application.

So here it's basically saying that Joe Public can nominate. Simple enough, yes?

**Q:** Who are the members of the Walk of Fame selection committee?

**A:** Each of the five categories is represented by someone with expertise in that field.

"Someone with expertise in that field" will select the final candidates out of all the applications sent in for closer review. Who the fuck is "someone"? And why can't we get to vote on who gets their star? Shit the bed, man, it's the *public* that pays the entertainment folks' salaries, right?

It gets better. Here are some of the criteria that possible inductees should possess:

## **Criteria for Star on the Walk of Fame**

1. *Professional achievement*
2. *Longevity of five years in the field of entertainment*
3. *Contributions to the community*  
*The recipient must agree to attend the dedication ceremony. In case of a fan nomination, a letter of agreement must be sent by celebrity management.*

*There is a five-year waiting period after death for nominations of deceased individuals. The Committee does not necessarily select posthumous honorees each year.*

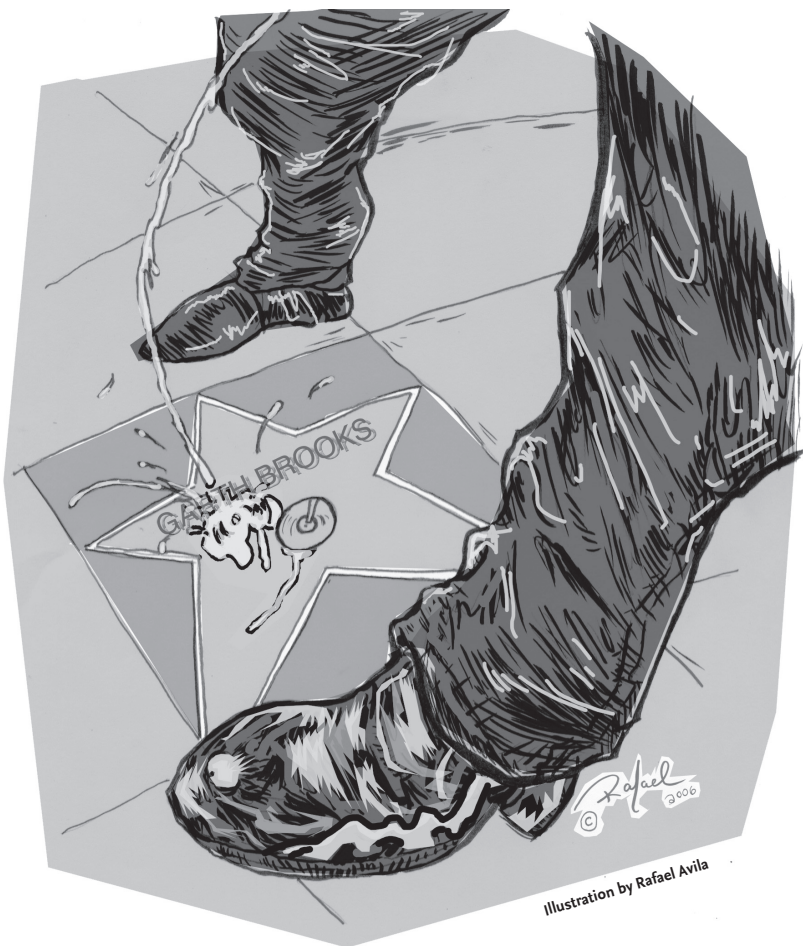
*The sponsorship fee is \$15,000.*

Keep number three up above in your mind for later on. It's going to fucking dumbfound you. And there's a fifteen grand "sponsorship" fee that's usually doled out by the inductee's bosses, i.e., film studios, recording labels, and such. Even the person/persons who nominated them can help out with the sponsorship fees. The inductees themselves never pay? Please don't insult my fucking intelligence.

In the start of things, The Walk of Fame began with 2,500 blank stars and over 1,500 of 'em were awarded during the first year and a half. Two thousand of the original stars were filled over ten years ago, with over 2,300 in place as I write this column here in my chair. 2,300—that's a lot of people being inducted into something that actually used to mean something in the golden age of entertainment. Don't get me wrong, there's a lot of those who have more than earned their spot up to this day along these filthy sidewalks of Hollywood, but all 2,300? Now's the time to remember those five areas of achievement and "contributions to the community" that were noted above. Look at some of what I found upon closer inspection of the past inductees list...

**Britney Spears:** Like it wasn't bad enough having to stomach her hick ass these past years, now this hooker's been laid amongst the sidewalk (no pun intended) in tribute with real women like Rita Hayworth. Not cool.

**Garth Brooks:** I don't care if he's been a KISS fan since he was a kid. Every



## Garth Brooks, every time it rains on your star here in L.A., that's Johnny Cash and Hank Williams pissing on you from above.

time it rains on your star here in L.A., that's Johnny Cash and Hank Williams pissing on you from above. Why don't you and Lance Armstrong go put your heads together, make an ass out of yourselves, and go fuck around on your second wives, you jerks.

**KC & The Sunshine Band:** If Hollywood wanted to honor a funky white guy, then Iggy Pop should've been the first in line to accept. Oh, I'm sorry, Hollywood likes to honor those performers who catered to a blow-sniffing community back in the disco era more than some scary animal who shot poison in his veins and sang about alienation and how fucked up the world is. My bad.

**Kenny G:** If I have to explain this to any of you, remind me to beat you down with a brick next time we meet.

**Michael Bolton:** It's bad enough that he was trying to attempt the Whitesnake-type of metal thing early on before he became "easy listening." He's as easy listening as the barking seal moan of Celine Dion. And Bolton gives Larry Fine (of *The 3 Stooges*) a bad name with that cat on his head he calls hair. Boo.

**Phil Collins:** As if his tenure with Genesis and solo career was barely enough

to stomach, Philo was the same crank who spouted off about punk rock when it was rearing its beautiful, hideous head in 1976-77. Pissed off that there was change in the air, he had lipped off to the press that the first Ramones LP was rubbish, with no redeeming music or social value. Pretty big words for a big-foreheaded foreskin that sings a song called "One More Night." No star for Buddy Holly (can you believe that shit!), but Su-Su-Sussudio gets one. Now that's a democracy. Somebody kill me.

**Ann B. Davis:** Oh, come on. Ann B. Davis? I could care less what she did after playing the part of the Brady's housekeeper and Sam the Butcher's sperm receptacle. Marla Gibbs (who played the snappy, wisecracking maid Florence on *The Jeffersons*) deserved it way more than Davis. The induction committee should have let them both street fight for it. Gibbs would've pulled that simpleton blue dress up over Davis' head hockey-style and beat her senseless.

**Arsenio Hall:** Hey, Asssmoochio (you can thank Howard for that one), I'm sure Richard Pryor's looking down on you, beside himself with glee that you have a star in Hollywood like he does. I mean, you've

done so much and set the bar like Pryor did in the entertainment business with your... uh, that...well, there's...just what is it you've done, anyway? And for the record, your impersonations are about as funny as the cancer that did my dad in. You need to go away.

**Ted Turner:** He gets one, but no star for Adolph Hitler or Satan himself. I guess he can share.

**David Hasselhoff:** I'm gonna make this one easy. Why did people watch *Knight Rider*? Wasn't you, Hasseldork. They wanted to see K.I.T. get all squirrely and fuck shit up. And *Baywatch*, which I never watched in my life, but I can still tell you why people tuned in with record network numbers—boobies, boobies, boobies (sorry, the fake shit just don't do it for Dale). If you really want to try and justify his star, attest it to his "singing" career over in Europe. Hey, sometimes even Hasselhonk has to grasp at straws, too.

**Tony Danza:** Please don't make me explain this one. It's going to give me a headache.

**Joan Rivers:** I had absolutely no idea that they made an exception to the rules and inducted her to the sidewalks of Hollywood under the Major Pain In The Ass category. If you take a close look at her star, the bronze icon under her name is a thorn branch stabbing into a pair of buttocks. And Joan, easy on the face lifts. You pull back any more and you're gonna start poking yourself in the eyes when putting on your earrings.

**William Shatner:** Bill got *Star Trek* fans' jollies off during the infant years of the TV show, but that hardly qualifies for a star. Even the acting he did in *The Twilight Zone* series years back was better than that. And, if any of you Shatner groupies have anything to say about it, just remember those records of him "singing" that were released. Sure, now he laughs it off and chalks it up to "experimenting" with singing back then, but deep down you know it fucked with him. Stick to what you know there, cocks. And to anyone who's curious what his LPs sound like, I highly suggest busting 'em out when you want to piss yourself laughing. God knows Gary and I did.

Again, these are just a few names that caught my attention on the site's list. When you get a second, go give it a closer look-see. You, too, will be scratching like a crabs-infested chimp in no time.

Ending on a more positive note, word has it that L.A.'s own Rodney Bingenheimer (KROQ's *Rodney On The Roq*) is slated to get his star in 2007. I guess there's still a bit of sense left in the mad world of Hollywood after all. Kudos to you, Rodney. It's been long overdue. While you're getting your comeuppance, remind the suits on that committee that three of the original four members of the Ramones have passed on. Ask them if it's not too much trouble to pull their heads out of their asses and get on it. It's only been thirty plus years.

I'm Against It



# FOR SCIENCE

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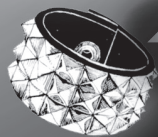
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# WON TON NOT NOW

ROMEO REALITY CHECK  
OR "I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LOVE IS"

BY KIYOSHI



INTRODUCING TO YOU ROMEO REALITY CHECK. HE IS THE MASTER OF ONE THOUSAND AND ONE PICK-UP LINES.

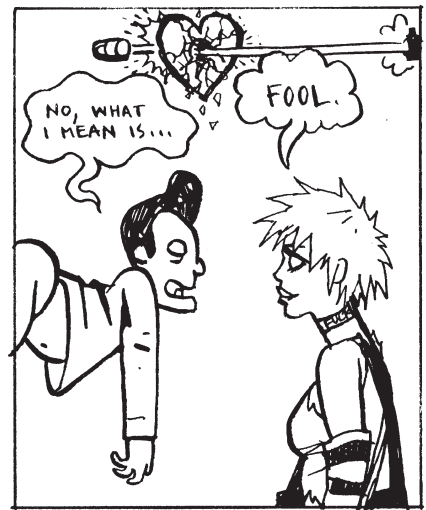
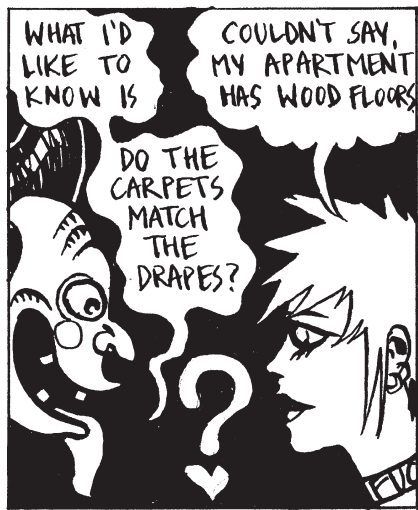


FOR SOME REASON HIS HEART FELT COME-ONS NEVER WORK.



BUT ONE TIME HE ACTUALLY DID GET LAID IN A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY WHILE USING AN ADVANCED LEVEL PICK-UP LINE. NOW HE LIVES EACH DAY OPTIMISTICALLY Hoping FOR THE TIME IT WORKS AGAIN.

LET'S WATCH HIM IN ACTION!



DEAR PUNK ROCK GIRL  
WE GOT SO CLOSE  
SO FAST. I ALREADY  
FEEL BAD REFERRING  
TO YOU AS MY EX,  
BUT THAT BUS CAME AND  
TOOK YOU AWAY FROM ME.  
I BLAME THE BUS FOR  
TEARING OUR LOVE APART.  
I'LL NEVER FORGET U.  
LOVE 4 EVER  
ROMEO

U+ME 4 EVA



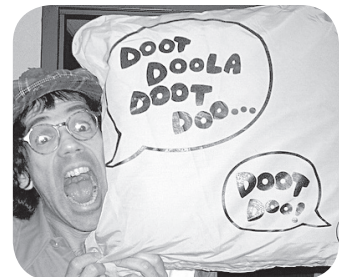
DOOT  
DOOLA  
DOOT  
DOO...

DOOT  
DOO!

# WHO ARE YOU?

DOOT  
DOOLA  
DOOT  
DOO...

DOOT  
DOO!



# Nardwuar vs. SXSW

## photo diary



Keith Morris from the Circle Jerks



Ninja from The Go! Team who have two drummers, with Edmonton's Shout Out! Out! Out! who have two drummers!



Pamela Des Barres, probably the most famous groupie of all time, was at SXSW signing copies of her recently re-issued classic book *I'm with the Band*. You might have read my interview with her in the last issue of *Razorcake*. Of course there is a Canadian connection! She lost her virginity to Toronto's Nick St. Nicholas of The Sparrow/Steppenwolf!





Members of the Gr1s Gr1s, The Culs, Time Flys and Toronto's Magenela Lane outside of the GSL Records showcase where perennial festival goer Elijah Wood was spotted watching GoGoGo Airheart.



Wayne Coyne of the Flaming Lips was spotted all over SXSW, including rolling down the street inside a giant clear inflatable ball!



With Henry Owings and the Chunklet Magazine crew. Chunklet's showcase was hosted by comedian Patton Oswalt, which is pretty darn cool!



Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth plus Greg from Toronto's Leather Uppers and his "road crew" pictured outside the "Canadian Blast" hospitality suite at the Hilton. The Leather Uppers were down in Austin promoting their upcoming LP *Bright Lights on Goner*.



Winnipeg's Novillero may have played four shows, including the Mint Records night, but they also somehow found time to check out Spoon, Belle and Sebastian, Sharon Jones, and the Wu Tang Clan. Plus the Novi Boyz even got a chance to participate in a late-night jam session with the first female record producer in the history of country music, Gail Davies!



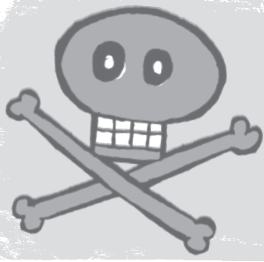
I met Mitch Clem who does all the wonderful illustrations for my *Razorcake* column! Thanks Todd for hooking us up! Mitch likes hats too!

Thanks to Mint Records and Andrew Pearson from Red Cat Records for the help with the photos.

For interviews with some of these SXSW bands hop to [www.nardwuar.com](http://www.nardwuar.com)







SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

MADDY TIGHT PANTS

“... a lifetime’s  
worth of frozen  
burritos and  
Converse shoes!”

# ART! PUNK!

Attention all broke, downtrodden, miserable punks! And I mean to the *real* broke punks, not the “I live in a dumpster and read Crimethinc zines for a living” punks! Not the “Give me some money so I can feed my dog and buy more whiskey” punks! Not even the “I need \$200 to buy the first pressing of the Rites of Spring record” punks! No, this message is not for the imposters among you!

This message is for the punks who are too crazy to hold down a job, the punks with kids, the sick punks, and the punks with plain old bad luck! You know who you are! Come forward now, and heed my advice! I have a plan to harness our collective strangeness, ineptitude, and penchant for bizarre forms of self expression, and turn it into cold, hard cash! Or, softer, warmer cash, if you prefer! Seriously!

I have done the hard work for you! I have braved a place, second only to a stadium parking lot post-Promise Keepers revival, in its inexplicable strangeness! Yes, I went to an art museum! And not just one, but many! In fact, were you to put me in a concrete room, crank up the Jets To Brazil, and poke me with the burning corpse of Blake Swarzenbach himself, I would be forced to admit that 1.) Although I don’t like emo, I never actually wanted Blake to be killed, and 2.) I like art. Serious art. Silly art. All kinds of art.

And so I know that, in the past few years, the Official Art World (OAW) has been going crazy over “outsider art.” You know, art made by “non-traditional” artists—religious zealots, homeless people, the mentally ill, working class people—basically anyone who isn’t sporting an artfully asymmetrical mullet while living in NYC making “installation pieces” about the connections between their menstrual blood, the Vatican, and the post-modern conception of “self.”

Every year or so, another random person is “discovered,” given an exhibit, and allowed to sell their drawings of stick people climbing trees, or Satan killing Jesus, or whatever, for thousands of dollars! All the while, we sit around looking in the couch cushions for beer money!

In Other Words: Our collective punk rock insanity is being wasted! We’re busy being crazy, doing strange things, and spending most of our time drawing cartoons or writing zines or stealing veggie corn

dogs, while struggling to pay rent, when, really, we could have our drawings of punks passing out in gutters framed and sold for a price that would easily cover ten year’s rent in a punk house *and* a lifetime’s worth of frozen burritos and Converse shoes!

Sadly, it’s not as simple as just going into your local art museum and taping your dumb comics on the wall. Trust me. You need to create mystery, intrigue, and highlight bizarre behavior! You need to portray your life story in the appropriately “outsider” way! Lucky for you, I’m prepared to offer the following brief DIY myth-building workshop!

**Punk Story:** You’re a crusty punk who wears an Assück back patch, spends most of your time drunk or trying to get drunk, and occasionally, when you get really drunk, you tear apart your beer cans with a Swiss Army knife and throw them into your neighbor’s backyard.

**Art Story:** Joe Disgusting is a 21st-century nomad, a cross between the self-destruction of Ernest Hemingway and the delightful whimsy of the young Marcel Duchamp. His twisted, torn, and discarded beer cans, exhibited in a collection titled “Fuck You! I Am Drunk Now” provide a searing commentary on the post-consumer society’s obsession with perfection. In his “Blatz” series, completed in a two-day frenzy, Disgusting shreds each can almost past the point of recognition, in an attempt to obliterate the cultural signifiers contained in today’s brand-based society.

**Punk Story:** You spend most of your time in a caffeinated frenzy, riding your bike and listening to pop punk records. Sometimes, after too many free refills at the diner, you stay up all night tracing the covers to old Mutant Pop records and listening to the Automatics.

**Art Story:** Annie Converse’s brilliant and incisive work created the “Tracing Movement” as we know it. By copying obscure images from discarded records, Converse attacks traditional notions of creativity and artist ownership. In her performance art pieces, this battle is heightened by the inclusion of music by an unknown band whose name, The Automatics, implies a critique of the “automatic” or rote

desire for originality on the part of most artists working today.

**Punk Story:** You and your friends were recently evicted from your long-standing punk house. Before you left, you invited every punk in town, and a couple of really sketchy traveling punks, for a giant party. You spilled beer everywhere and declared the bathroom “off limits” to force people to pee and puke on the floor. At four AM, a random middle-aged dude showed up and ended up kicking down the bathroom door and smoking crack in the bathtub.

**Art Story:** The installation piece, Destruction House, exhibits a shockingly stark rejection of bourgeoisie morality. Kate Destruction smears urine and human feces on the walls and floors to signify disgust with the traditional limitations imposed on the artistic canvas. The installation continues in the bathroom, where a single metal object, designed to look like drug paraphernalia, sits in the middle of the bathroom, as though to say, “The twentieth-century concentration on form is nothing more than a delusional escapist fantasy.” Kate’s work rejects definition. The bathroom door is kicked in. The walls have holes. The entire project is permeated by a sense of what the French call “degout.”

See, it’s easy! If you’re really having trouble, try the Art Back-Story Mad Lib on the next page!

Then, having cultivated your own artful mystique, you slap \$5,000 price tags on each painting, have one exhibit, and retire, thereby becoming the art world’s J.D. Salinger. Don’t worry about never producing any “art” again. In fact, this will only jack up the prices of the five “missing” paintings you’ll suddenly happen upon ten years later once you’ve spent all your art money on a cereal-powered bouncy castle.

So, when you’re basking in your newfound fame and extensive collection of limited edition Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles merchandise, don’t say I never helped you out! The End!

—Maddy



P.S. Please send tokens of gratitude (Russian cartoons, Cinnamon Toast Crunch haikus, and money) to me at: Maddy, 3220 Garfield Ave. So. #104, Mpls, MN 55408



# "Become An Artist" Mad Lib!

It's easy! Just fill in the blanks, tear out the sheet, and take it to your local wealthy art patron! Michelangelo, watch out!



You mean THIS could be art?



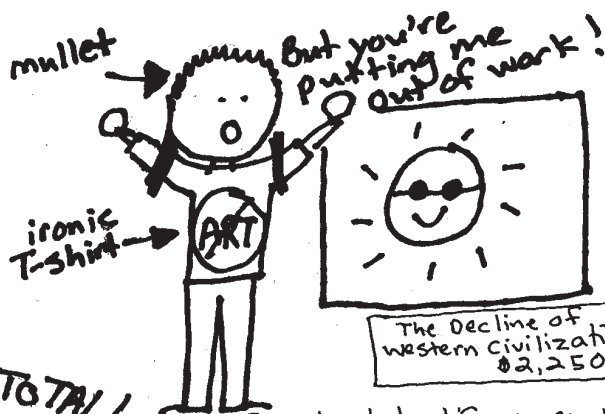
XP!

\_\_\_\_\_ 's shocking series  
(Your punk name)  
of drawings, entitled "Fuck \_\_\_\_\_",  
documents a horrifying (your fav band)  
descent into a world where shape and  
form become blurred, and traditional  
definitions no longer suffice.  
\_\_\_\_\_ most well-known work,  
(Her/His) simply entitled \_\_\_\_\_, contains  
(name of your fav punk house)  
oblique references to early Modigliani  
and late Renoir. \_\_\_\_\_ 's decision  
(Your punk name)  
to affix \_\_\_\_\_ to the canvas  
(your strangest dumpster find)  
suggests a delightful sense of whimsy  
not encountered since the young  
Picasso scoured the coasts of Africa  
for inspiration.

## Special Bonus

"Pricing Your Work" Calculator!

\_\_\_\_\_ (cost of your fav burrito)  
X 365  
\_\_\_\_\_  
X \_\_\_\_\_ (number of yrs you expect to live)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL!



The Decline of Western Civilization \$2,250-

\*Note: To calculate life expectancy, take 80, and subtract 0.4 for each time you've vomited due to overconsumption of Oreo-flavored PopTarts®.





## A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**“He was a binge drinker, a rogue who lived on the edges of society and never apologized for his lifestyle.”**

# SUING GOD AND SELLING COKE

### Part One of the Jim Thompson Story

When he was twelve years old, Jim Thompson was the youngest freshman in his Fort Worth high school. Almost six years later, Thompson was the oldest freshman in the same high school. This seems like a fitting beginning for one of America's greatest crime novelists and probably the most punk rock writer to never know about punk rock.

Thompson came from a time long before the Ramones, Minor Threat, and the bands we cover in this magazine. Hell, he died in the year that most people credit punk rock as being born: 1977. Still, his life was so colorful, so self-destructive, and in its own beautiful way, so fucked up that he deserves a little space in these pages.

Jim Thompson was born in an Oklahoma jail in 1906. Or, to be more precise, he was born in the room above the jail. His father was a local sheriff, a tough and affable guy, a rogue in the truest American sense: a heavy drinker, a gambler who lost more often than not, and a man always ready for a fight, even if he had to start it. This was the end of the Old West and James Thompson (Jim's father) adapted the only way a rough and tumble western sheriff knew how to. He nurtured his own corruption. He turned to politics, using his power as a lawmaker to trade favors, make connections with higher ups in the Oklahoma Republican party, and even springboard his popularity into a run for Congress. In fact, when Jim was born, James was actively involved in his own congressional campaign. The campaign was unsuccessful in two ways. First, James didn't win the congressional seat. Second, the attention he drew by running for Congress shed a light on the over \$30,000 he'd embezzled from the city coffers. In 1907, before Jim was even a year old, James left the family and went on the lam. It makes a strange kind of sense that the infant who James left in the crib would grow up to be one of America's most celebrated crime writers.

Jim's mother, Birdie, moved the family to Nebraska. They lived there with Birdie's parents and assorted relatives. Birdie worked a variety of jobs to try to support her two kids, but mostly, they lived off of the grandparents' money. Jim's grandfather was a fairly successful farmer—at least successful enough that he didn't have to do

much of the physical work on the farm by the time Jim moved in. James, in the meantime, went through a series of ups and downs in his life. At some points, James would be flush with cash, at other points, he'd be dirt broke and working a manual labor job. When he had money, James would pick up his wife and kids and move out of Nebraska, usually to Texas or Oklahoma, and raise the family. When the money was gone, James, too, would vanish and Birdie, Jim, and his sisters would all go back to the family farm in Nebraska.

While at the farm, Jim's grandfather, William Henry Myers, would entertain Jim. A lot of this entertaining meant that Grandpa Myers would drink and gamble. Jim was seven years old the first time he got drunk with his grandfather. Prior to Jim leaving for Fort Worth in 1919, Grandpa Myers had shown Jim the finer sides of the various gambling and burlesque houses in Burwell, Nebraska.

In 1919, James returned to Burwell a millionaire. He'd struck it rich as a Texas oil man. He picked up his family and moved them to Fort Worth, determined to make up for lost time. He took a great deal of interest in family affairs and in Jim's upbringing. For Jim, it seemed too little, too late. Jim worked hard at school for a short time and did what he could to be a good son, but it didn't work out too smoothly. To compound matters, James was losing his oil money as quickly as he'd made it. This led to a very short-lived renaissance for the family. Within a few months, Jim was picking up odd jobs to help the family make ends meet. Grandpa Myers joined the family around this time. Now that Jim was reunited with his drinking buddy, they spent a good deal of time in the burlesque houses of Fort Worth. Jim spent so much time at one particular burlesque house that he worked out a scam with the owners of the club. The club had weekly talent shows in which contestants would pony up an entry fee and the winning act took all the money. Jim entered these talent shows. He put together a vaudeville-type act where he'd do things like dress up as a paperboy and shout out headlines like, “Seven Shot in a Crap Game,” or “Ten Men Found Dead in the Graveyard,” or “Disaster at Soup Factory—Vegetables Turnip and Pea.” The club owners usually voted Jim as the winner. They used his winnings to pay for his bar tab.

Drinking with his grandfather and hanging out with burlesque houses alone didn't condemn Jim to six years as a high school freshman. Within a few years of moving to Fort Worth, James was nearly out of money. Jim took over the responsibilities of providing money for the family. He was fifteen years old at the time. He took a job as a bellboy in the posh Hotel Texas. He made fifteen dollars a month there, officially. Unofficially, he made about three hundred dollars a week. Jim would provide guests with whatever they needed, including but not limited to hookers, drugs, and, this being the age of prohibition, booze. Jim had connections for marijuana, cocaine, whiskey, and women. He worked the night shift at the hotel and spent a lot of time running back and forth between the hotel itself and various seedy neighborhoods where he'd pick up his merchandise. Jim used a bit of the merchandise himself, mostly booze and cocaine. He was an alcoholic before he turned sixteen.

Because Jim was a minor during his Hotel Texas days, he still had to go to school during the day. He did most of his sleeping there. According to Thompson's memoir *Bad Boy*, his days as a bellboy ended when he crossed a mobster and had to flee Texas with his family. This isn't likely a true story, though. Thompson embellished quite a bit of his personal history in *Bad Boy*. In fact, he embellished his memoir to the point where he invented a character, Allie Ivers, as a sort of alter-ego to himself. Whenever Thompson wanted to discuss something shady he'd done, he'd blame it on the fictional Allie. The truth is that Thompson probably just needed to sober up and get on with his life. He most likely left Fort Worth because he wanted to go to college. He was already writing and publishing. He'd sold an article to a Nebraska farm journal, and they helped him get a scholarship to the University of Nebraska.

Jim spent a couple of years at the University of Nebraska. He met his wife there. He also worked at Nebraska's famous literary journal, *Prairie Schooner*. The editor at the journal was so impressed with Thompson's writing that he published one of his poems, something the editor rarely did with students. This was at the beginning of the Great Depression, though. Before long,

Jim had a wife and a child to raise, and he still carried the responsibility of supporting his mother and younger sister, so Jim took a page out of his father's playbook: he hit the road. Jim hoboed around Texas and Oklahoma for a while, working on the Texas oil pipeline, doing a variety of jobs, and traveling with his buddy, Harry McClintock. Thompson later documented these experiences—which were brutal; coworkers died next to him, the mess halls served rancid meat, one job Thompson worked had him handling hot tar and the fumes burned the skin off his face—in his book *South of Heaven*. McClintock also documented his experiences when he wrote the song, “Big Rock Candy Mountain.”

Jim returned to his wife, child, mother, and sister by the early 1930s. They moved to Oklahoma and Jim supported the family by writing stories for various true crime magazines. Jim's mother and sister did a lot of the research while Jim wrote the stories. This was the time when Jim really honed his craft as a fiction writer. As often as not, Thompson's true crime stories of this period were embellishments or total fabrications. Still, they led to him landing what was probably the most secure job of his life at the Oklahoma Writer's Project.

The Writer's Project was an offshoot of President Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA was a series of federally funded jobs designed to boost the economy and get the U.S. out of the Depression. The Oklahoma Writer's Project did the research for a number of books on Oklahoma: travel books, local histories, labor histories, etc. Thompson worked on *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State*. He traveled throughout the state gathering information but also compiling oral histories of the people of Oklahoma and doing the research on a labor history. By this point in his life, Thompson, like many in the Oklahoma Writer's Project, was a communist. These political beliefs were most likely a legacy of his work on the oil pipeline where he saw the vast disparity between the wealthy and the poor, the ones working and the ones who get the money for that work. He attended communist meetings, held them at his house, and supported the cause in a variety of ways. Oddly, one of his fellow communists working on the Writer's Project was pulp Western novelist Louis L'Amour. According to various members of the Writer's Project, Thompson nearly single-handedly wrote *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State*. He wrote voraciously during this time, working on the guide and a labor history of Oklahoma. Very little of this writing still exists.

By 1940, Thompson was the head of the Writer's Project. He was also making enemies in the state government. His communist ties were frowned upon. In fact, when threats of World War II shifted federal funding, the Writer's Project looked like it was going to be cancelled. Oklahoma Governor Leon Phillips agreed to continue funding the project, provided Jim Thompson was fired from it.

A progressive bookstore in Oklahoma City was raided around this time. A few of Thompson's communist friends were rounded up and arrested. Jim, taking another page out of his father's playbook, fled from Oklahoma one step ahead of the law.

In 1941, Thompson finally decided to make real his dreams of becoming a novelist. Jim's story goes like this: Thompson left the family in San Diego and drove the family car east toward New York, because New York was where all the publishers lived. He stopped at a nursing home in Oklahoma on the way and visited his father. Jim told James to hang in there, that he'd be back in a few months with enough money to take James to San Diego with the rest of the family. Jim went on to New York. He walked into the offices of several publishers, introduced himself as a novelist, and told them that if they fronted him a typewriter and two weeks living expenses, he'd deliver a novel in two weeks. The first five publishers told him to take a hike. The sixth publisher went for it, though. He fronted Thompson the money. Two weeks later, Thompson delivered *Now and on Earth*. The publisher bought the book. Buoyed by his success, Thompson headed back to Oklahoma to pick up his father. His father, though, had committed suicide just a couple of days earlier.

This story, like most of Thompson's, likely took some liberty with the facts.

The truth, according to Thompson's biographer, Robert Polito, is almost as interesting. Thompson arrived in New York gunning to write his first book. He borrowed a typewriter from one of his Communist Party friends. He wrote and drank and floated around radical circles in New York for a couple of months. He met Woody Guthrie at one of these parties. The two became friends. Thompson showed Guthrie a copy of his finished novel, *Now and on Earth*, and Guthrie loved it. He contacted a publisher friend and introduced Thompson. The publisher was as enamored with the book as Guthrie had been, so he bought it. Thompson did stop to visit his father on the return trip from New York, but James had died from natural causes by then.

*Now and on Earth* was the first of three mainstream literary novels that Thompson



**Jim Thompson was one of America's greatest crime novelists and probably the most punk rock writer to never know about punk rock.**

wrote. He followed it up with his strongest non-crime novel, *Heed the Thunder*, a largely autobiographical novel about the family farm in Nebraska. *Heed the Thunder* is a cross between a Nelson Algren-style proletariat novel and a depraved Thompson letting his id run wild. One of the highlights comes when the grandmother of the family signs the deed of the farm over to God, and the family lawyer sues God to get the farm back. It's hilarious. It's also incredibly bold for Thompson to both write an essentially socialist novel about the American farmer and to satirize Christianity in 1946.

At this point, Thompson had established the pattern of behavior that would haunt him for the rest of his life. He was a binge drinker, a rogue who lived on the edges of society and never apologized for his lifestyle yet still yearned for some mainstream acceptance, a political radical, a man who felt no responsibility to the truth if it interfered with a good story, and a man with a shady past that would lead to his self-destruction. Tune in next issue for the glory years and tragic decline of Jim Thompson.

—Sean Carswell



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**First day in San Francisco. Me and Wade in a taxi. Drunk.**



**Jenny Angelillo's Photo Page**



# SIGNAL LOST

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS PEIGLER  
PHOTOS BY JACK BARFIELD AND CHRIS PEIGLER



photo by Jack Barfield

I liked what I heard of Signal Lost at first, but I didn't immediately seek out their Prank Records debut *Children of the Wasteland*. It was only when I found out that they would be playing in my state (in Asheville, NC which is a 2-1/4 hours' drive for me) that I decided to head to my local independent record store (Lunchbox Records in Charlotte, NC) and plunk down my \$8.99 (how about that?) for that first album. I was considering going to their show, but before I made that decision I needed to know just how much I liked this band. Would they be worth the drive? Well, as it turns out, I was pretty well floored by them. In the interview below, you'll hear me complain (just like an old man!) about so many of today's punk singers. Signal Lost doesn't fit this musical example, but take for instance the number of bands today who pay musical homage to The Ramones. How many of their singers do you think listen to and emulate the same '60s pop and rock singers that Joey did? Probably not too many I'd say. Most of them have fairly generic (to these ears) pop punk singers who don't exude the personality that Joey did. Ashley, the singer for Signal Lost, has enough personality and lungs to blow down doors. She can sing melodically and yet also yell as authoritatively as any punk singer from any decade. On their more recent 4-song 7" EP *You'll Never Get Us Down Again* she amps up to some powerful screaming as well. The other band member whose contributions helped seal my departure plans for Asheville is guitar player Stan. His playing reminds me of TSOL's Ron Emory whom I love although from meeting Stan I'd have to say that Greg Sage of The Wipers is probably a more accurate influence and that scores a lot of points with me as well.

Until I saw them live I didn't fully appreciate the rhythm section of Jasmine on bass and Chris on drums. Unlike a lot of punk bass players, Jasmine uses her fingers instead of a pick and definitely does more than just keep time (old guys like me and the late Joey would probably call it a groove) while Chris plays with that extra passion that separates a competent drummer from a great one. I arrived in Asheville with my tape recorder hoping to interview them before the show, but I'd made no attempt to contact them beforehand. Several hours before show time and by pure coincidence they walked into the restaurant where I had just ordered my food. I had a great time hanging out with and interviewing them. They played an amazing set and in all my years of driving long distances to see shows I don't think any band member has ever thanked me for making the drive as often or as sincerely as Stan did that night. Well... Marcy from Scrawl did kiss me on the cheek one time, but, uh, that's different!

**Chris P:** So, I understand that before Signal Lost you had never sung in a band before?

**Ashley:** I was always into singing. I was in choir when I was in school. And growing up in Austin, everyone you knew was in a band. I don't know how to play an instrument. I thought it would be cool to sing for a band. Stan moved to town. He expressed interest in playing something melodic which is what I wanted to do at the time. So we got together, met up with some more people. It just ended up working out. It was just supposed to be something kind of fun, play a few shows, maybe do a 7". It seemed to work out pretty well. It ended up being a lot of fun.

**Chris P:** I know with a lot of punk bands today you either have The Cookie Monster on lead vocals or a lead singer who screams all the way through. With your band what first struck me is although the vocals are very powerful, I could understand all the words. Was this a conscious decision?

**Stan:** I think it's maybe just the way her style evolved. We wanted to have singing more than screaming.

**Ashley:** I know sometimes I do scream more and I like a lot of those bands where you can't necessarily understand what they're singing. I don't want to have to explain every single song before we play it. That might have something to do with it, but it's just the style.

**Stan:** I think even when she sings more aggressively you can still understand what she's saying.

**Chris P:** Did you go to a private Christian school or something along those lines?

**Ashley:** Oh no. When you got to middle school and high school you could do band, orchestra, or choir and I just picked choir and I stuck with it until I was a sophomore or a junior in high school. That's just what I did. I just couldn't learn to play an instrument. I liked it. I would always get involved in the musicals and try out for solos but I was just too scared to really do it back then.

**Chris P:** Where did you grow up?

**Stan:** I grew up on the North Carolina coast, then I lived in Memphis for a long time.

**Jasmine:** I'm from Arizona, but I've lived in Texas most of my life so I might as well have been from there.

**Chris:** I was born in Michigan. I moved to Dallas when I was five years old and I moved to Austin ten years ago.

**Chris P:** Are you a native of Austin?

**Ashley:** I'm from the suburbs right outside of Austin. That's about as close as you can get. Nobody's from Austin nowadays. I've been going to Austin for punk shows since I was fourteen.

**Chris P:** When your band first started you had very short-term goals. Do you have more long-range ones now?

**Chris:** We're just trying to go forward with it, trying to write new, better songs. It's not like we have a particular goal we're trying to achieve. We just want to keep doing it.

**Stan:** I think that together we write faster and tighter now and things happen faster.

**Ashley:** I think we're starting to get really used to each other. It was a little hard at first because we're all very different from each other. If the band breaks up I'll probably go crazy, so we can't break up!

**Chris P:** In your interview in *Maximum Rock'n'roll* you mentioned that you went away for a while and then you came back but that you definitely weren't leaving the band because it "keeps you sane."

**Ashley:** I travel a lot—sometimes with other bands—and I tried to move to the Northwest for a while then I ended up having to go back home to practice for tour, but I just never went back. I just stayed in Austin.

**Chris P:** You've said, "Austin has the best punk scene."

**Ashley:** I think we do.

**Stan:** We have one of the best in the country.

**Ashley:** Traveling everywhere, obviously places like Portland have awesome punk scenes. Asheville is a fucking awesome place to come to. Philadelphia; I could name a bunch of cities I really enjoy myself in. I'm sure everyone would agree, but the thing about Austin is it's not a cliqueish city and everyone hangs out with everyone. Street punks hang out with the hardcore punks.

**Stan:** The garage rockers...

**Ashley:** We all go to parties together.

**Chris:** It's hard to be objective about it since we are all traveling and touring a lot, but Austin's a nice place to live. When I first moved there it wasn't really for music, it was just to get out of Dallas and then I started doing music. It's a cool city otherwise.

**Stan:** It's still relatively cheap right now. It's going up.

**Chris P:** The lyric that I related to the most on your album is from the song "Identity Crisis." There are a million punk songs complaining about conformity in mainstream society but that one seems to be about conformity within the punk scene.

**Ashley:** Exactly! That particular song was written about a city that I went to which I won't name where it was really weird because I had lots of friends from different scenes and I wanted to hang out with all of them, but they wouldn't go hang out with "those people" or they didn't want to go to a specific bar because "those people" didn't want to hang out with these "other people." Then some of the other kids who were there were rude to me. It was really weird coming from Austin where everyone gets along. Who cares? We're all just friends. We're all just trying to play music and have fun and whatever. It's just about people being close-minded and people making fun of punk kids when they first start seeing them around. Kids are making fun of them and the way they dress.

**Stan:** They don't know the "right" records.

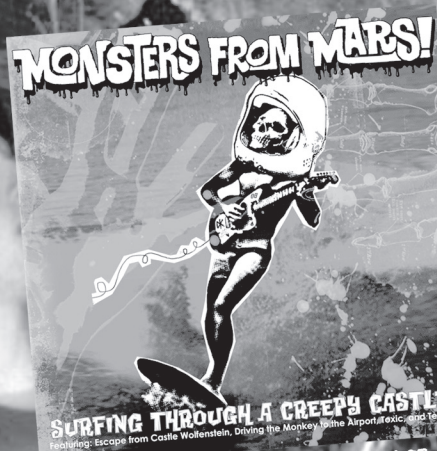


# BLACK SUNDAY

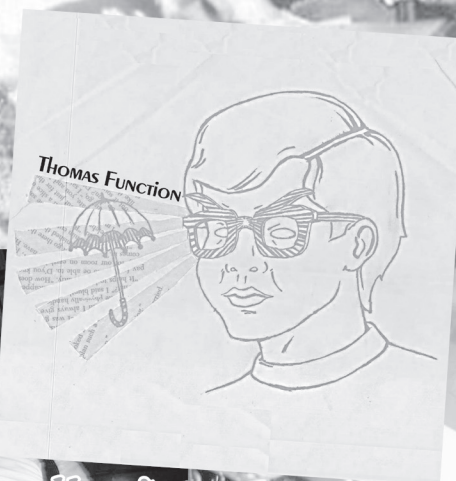
memphis



"cut-out" 7-inch



"surfing through a creepy castle" 7-inch



"s/t" 7-inch

# THOMAS FUNCTION

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**Ashley:** They don't have pretentious record collections and stuff like that.

**Stan:** Bands like The Big Boys were weird and different and did their own thing and dressed up different and their music was different.

**Chris P:** When Biscuit (Randy "Biscuit" Turner, lead singer of The Big Boys) died I told one of my friends who didn't know who they were and I said if they came and played our town today, they would be considered just as new and different today as they were then, which is a weird thing to consider since they were a band from twenty-five years ago!

**Stan:** Yeah. I also think that if they played now some people wouldn't accept them or wouldn't like them in the hardcore scene.

**Chris:** Even with our band we deal with it too. We're not like a hardcore band or a street punk band. We just play what we like out of whatever style and that just draws different people. We have different friends and different people like us, which is cool.

**Chris P:** I knew about this but I wasn't aware of how closely some of the members of Signal Lost were affected by this until I read Al Quint's column on the incident. I'm referring to the stabbing of Jack Control. (Jack Control, the singer for World Burns To Death, was stabbed by what has been described as "random train hopper kids" in Jan. 2006 at a show being held at the pizza parlor Jasmine's family owns and operates. The train hopper had broken out the front window of the parlor when Jasmine and Jack confronted them about it. As one of the train hopper lunged at Jasmine, Jack interceded and another train hopper came from behind Jack and stabbed him, just missing his heart. Jack lost four pints of blood and underwent three to four hours of surgery. With no health insurance to defray the costs, his hospital bill was in excess of \$80,000.) Did the kids who were involved in the stabbing have any connection with the punk scene?

**Ashley:** I hate to associate people like that with the punk scene—not all of them—but there was this specific group of people who were being very disrespectful and being rowdy.

**Jasmine:** Before they were fighting the punks there they were fighting each other and that's why the cops got called in the first place. The kids who came up to me didn't come across as any kind of punk rocker. They were more like train hopper and were making extreme racist comments to me. They broke the window on my parents' business.

**Stan:** Her parents' pizza parlor is right next to the record shop.

**Jasmine:** It was hard to deal with. I specifically remember those kids trying to bum money from me before they got in a fight and I'm like "Hey, I'm a punk rocker. I don't have any more money than you do and if I do it's because I work for it." They were sitting there like, "She won't give me a dollar. Fuck her!"

**Stan:** They also only came to that show because it was a free show.

**Jasmine:** They wouldn't normally go to a show unless it was free. And even when they were at the show, they weren't watching it. They were just being a nuisance and trying to get money off people. One of the guys who initially started the trouble had been in Austin for a couple of months.

**Stan:** That area, there's the record store and the pizza place, and it's kind of an area that they gravitate towards.

**Jasmine:** There's a house around the corner called The Compound where there are always constantly different people every month. After Hurricane Katrina there were lots of different people coming through there. I knew who they were because they brought in their gift cards (to her parents' restaurant). Some of them were really



photo by Chris Peigler



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cool and some were really disrespectful and really angry and wanted to take it out on other people.

**Chris P:** So how is Jack doing now?

**Ashley:** He's doing really well. He's pretty much recovered. He was in the ICU for several days and that was really scary, but he's pretty much the toughest guy that most of us know.

**Chris:** At first, he was really taking it easy just to be safe but the whole last month he's been doing construction work on a friend's warehouse.

**Chris P:** So how much money has been raised to pay for his medical expenses?

**Ashley:** I don't know the exact amount...

**Chris:** [to Ashley] Weren't you the treasurer? [Everyone laughs]

**Ashley:** The fucking punk scene really came together for that shit. People were e-mailing me right away asking "how can we help?" and people started sending money to Timmy (friend of Jack's and Signal Lost's who was present at the interview. I had seen Timmy's e-mail address which is timmythetexasdurd@gmail.com listed in many Austin-related punk happenings and when I realized who he was I loudly proclaimed in the middle of the restaurant "You're Timmy The Texas Turd!" which brought a huge round of laughs). I was trying to get benefit shows together in a couple of different cities. I received e-mails from the Czech Republic, Sweden, Mexico, Germany. People all over the world were booking shows and sending the money. It was awesome! That's why it's so cool to be a part of this community because people come out of the woodwork and fucking do shit like that!

**Chris P:** [to Jasmine] So, obviously, your parents are supportive because you get to have shows at the pizza parlor.

**Jasmine:** Uh, yeah, sometimes they didn't know about them! There were some shows I didn't tell them about.

**Chris:** Her parents aren't typical.

**Jasmine:** My parents are punk rockers! They're not easy to rebel against!

**Ashley:** Jasmine would have to become a raver to rebel against her parents!

**Jasmine:** My parents are really understanding. They're really proud of me. They really support everything I do, and luckily, that helps me go on tour. They give me a job when I'm there at the pizza place.

**Stan:** [Spoken in radio announcer voice] If you're ever in Austin stop by The Parlor. Soon with two locations! They have a really good jukebox!

**Jasmine:** Yeah, they're opening up a new Parlor. We're expanding. We'll be able to have bigger shows!

**Chris P:** What about everyone else's parents?

**Ashley:** Our first tour we ever did was in Mexico and somehow my mom and Jasmine's mom got each other's numbers and they were really worried because Jasmine was only eighteen and I was twenty-two. And I'm really close to my mom so they somehow got in touch and talked to each other every day while we were on tour.

Then when we came back and played a show they met each other. My mom comes to the shows. My mom is not necessarily your typical mother either. My mom's an old biker lady. My mom's awesome. She's proud. My brother said she kinda teared up when we got on stage.

**Stan:** I've seen Jasmine's mom cry. My mom's really into me doing this. She thinks it's awesome that we're touring and seeing all these places.

**Chris:** My mom is older and a little more traditional. She's really supportive but she thinks, "It'd be nice if you made some money doing that."

**Stan:** My mom doesn't understand that either.

**Ashley:** My mom, too. She's like, "When are you going to start making money?" And I'm like "I don't think that's going to happen, mom."

**Chris:** I have an older brother who's really cool and really supportive. He got me into a lot of music when I was younger. Since I was first playing in bands at age fifteen, he's always been a part of it.

**Ashley:** He comes out to the shows wearing our shirts.

**Chris P:** We don't have to talk about this if you don't want to, but on your 7?" I thought you might be singing about your mother on the song, "Domestic Relief."

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**Jasmine:** Yeah, that's the "Mom Song."

**Ashley:** That's definitely about my mom and learning from her mistakes. I can explain the song in a ton of different ways. It would be awesome if a mom who was in that situation heard that song. It's about my step dad who was really mean to her. All my life I grew up watching my mother being treated really badly by men. Finally, one day, she got rid of his ass. She's been single ever since and she's been happier now than I've ever seen her before. I'm twenty-six now and it sucks that it took until I was twenty-one for her to finally get rid of this person and move on and just get rid of that whole lifestyle. It just seems like there are so many women who get in these situations they think that they have to be with a man and they can't be alone and it sucks because they end up really unhappy, whether it's mental abuse or physical abuse. And it happens to men, too, because people are just so scared to be alone and they just end up in these crappy situations and they can't get out. It's just about that and how I have a whole new respect for my mom once she finally got rid of all that.

**Jasmine:** I think almost every person or every girl takes their own meaning from those lyrics. Even for me, I didn't know why Ashley wrote that song at first but it took on its own meaning for me. For me, it was about learning from your parents' mistakes and not make the same mistakes.

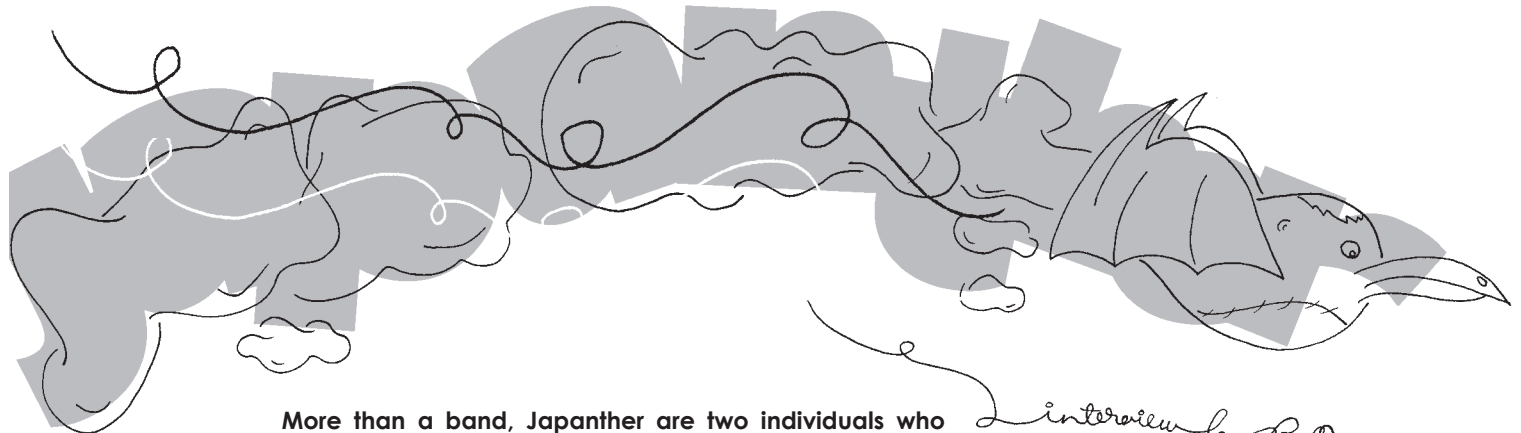
**Ashley:** We all know our parents made a lot of fucking mistakes and if you pay attention to them and are aware maybe you can not make the same mistakes because it seems

photo by Jack Barfield

**WE'RE ALL JUST FRIENDS.  
WE'RE ALL JUST TRYING TO  
PLAY MUSIC AND HAVE FUN.**

like that is what happens. People just keep repeating their parents' mistakes, whether it be drug abuse, violence, domestic situations, having children at a really young age, and getting yourself into situations that you can't handle. It's very liberating to see my mom so strong now. She's fifty-two years old. So strong, so much happier!





More than a band, Japanther are two individuals who share a creative outlet. It may seem tricky to grasp the breadth of their work, but the work itself is not hard to understand. Japanther works on many levels. Musically, they are a two piece—bass and drums—then add in the tape machine that they play to and write all the music that is recorded on it, and a whole different take on the band comes about. It's a project, a project that appears to have become a machine, its own vehicle.

To move like they do and create like they do is amazing and highly inspiring.

Interview by BD Williams  
and Paul  
photos by Rudy Olivarez  
art junk by Amy Adozie

**BD:** Ian, what do you do with the zines you put out?

**Ian:** I keep them and say I'm tight. Patte la Cooch did some drawings for the last one about how computers work, how an oil refinery works, and how cell phones work. So he did some illustrations and I wrote these articles about how these basic technologies work, because those things run our lives and I think people don't understand them at all.

**BD:** So do you understand how cell phones and computers work? Are you mechanically inclined in those ways?

**Ian:** No. I just think it's important to try and know something about it. I don't claim to know shit. I think the smartest guys will tell you they don't really know shit. They're like, "We'll try it, but we'll probably break it in the process."

**BD:** Why are you Japanther?

**Ian:** Why you lookin' at me?

**Riley:** To express ourselves.

**Ian:** It's a creative flag. Like a branding or a flag that we fly.

**Riley:** It's our creative spirit animal. It's our collective-creative spirit animal.

**BD:** Just between the two of you?

**Ian:** There's several other people.

**Riley:** Many, many other people.

**Ian:** Our friend Mark that puts out our albums is a part of our family. Our friend Devin, who makes our artwork and has recorded us, is a part of our family. A bunch of people have collaborated on our albums.

**Rawl:** I've seen you guys live with a guitar player.

**Ian:** Right. Our friend Egyptian Power plays guitar. Our friend Claudia plays guitar. Our friend Don sings in our band sometimes. It's a collective creative spirit animal.

**Riley:** The more people, the more powerful the animal. The happier the animal.

**Ian:** It's part of the different moods the animal has.

**Riley:** It's like any other creature.

**Ian:** We are Japanther to eat food. We go on tour to try and eat some food.

**BD:** Like almond pancakes?

**Ian:** Cosmic almond pancakes.

**BD:** Why not Japancakes?

**Ian:** They're from Houston.

**Riley:** They're already a band, man.

**Ian:** Japanties, I've heard that one before.

**Riley:** Jah Jahpanther.

**Ian:** My friend Megan and her best friend had a band that opened for us and they had a band called Jahpanther. They had weed leafs painted on their foreheads, rainbow head bands, and they were super-cute girls and they were awesome. It was genius.

**BD:** Why do you sing about River Phoenix?

**Riley:** Because I read a book called *The Fast Times and Short Life of River Phoenix*. I don't know. I just read the book and it was an interesting case where...I don't know. The song was actually "River Romantics" and then we figured...

**Ian:** The River Romantics are a group of guys who live next to a river in Miami and they have it going on. They have a shopping cart with a boom box and then if you flip the shopping cart on its side they have a stove kind of set-up. They're fishing next to this river all day and cooking fish at night and listening to the boom box.

**Riley:** It's like a contemporary covered wagon.

**Ian:** Yeah. They would rally their wagons at night.

**Riley:** And eat fish out of the river. And they had a dirty dog.

**Ian:** It was December and it was snowing in New York and we were in Miami for two weeks. I don't know how long we were there—a while—and we would see them everyday when we walked to work. And like, "Damn, the River Romantics." They're tight. That's why that song was originally written and then Riley read that book about River Phoenix. You have to popularize things, you know, to let other people understand them. So for us it's actually the "River Romantics."

**BD:** There's another song... is it "Rise Above Your Opportunity"?

**Riley:** "Challenge and Opportunity."

**Ian:** To rise above the smoke and debris.

**Riley:** And that was interpreted from an old school hip hop song that inspired me. It's kind of a reflection on New York present and past. It's also kind of encompasses living in any place and, hopefully, has a universal theme of "even though it's hard, you can do it."

**BD:** What were the lyrics you had when we walked down to the beach?

**Riley:** When I rapped it?

**BD:** Yeah.

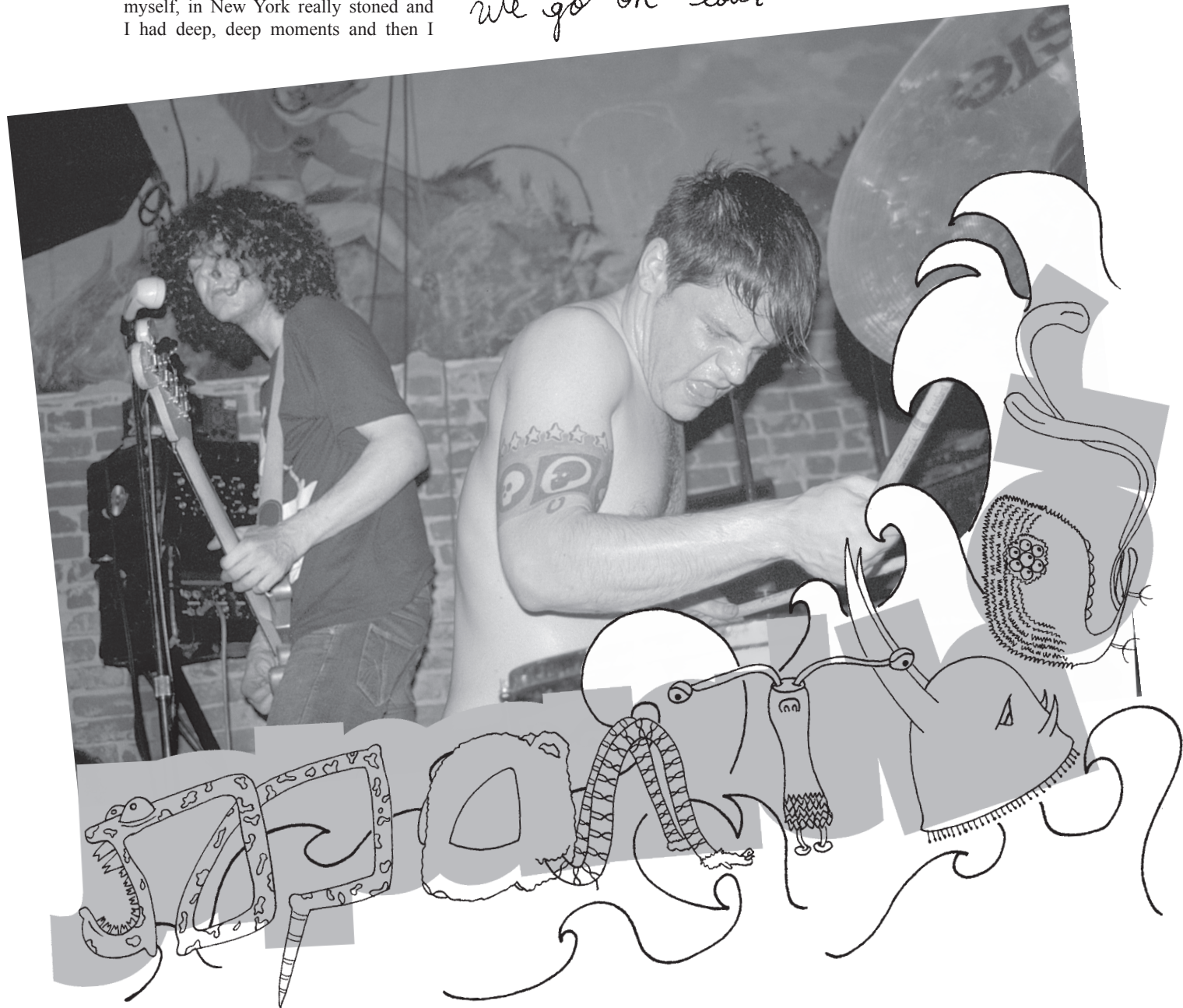
**Riley:** "Look past the garbage, over the trains, under the ruins, through the remains, around the crime and pollution, and tell me where I fit in. South Bronx, New York, that's where I dwell, and to a lot of people it's a living hell, full of frustration and poverty, but, wait, that's not how it looks to me. It's a challenge, an opportunity to rise above the smoke and debris. Got to start with nothing and then you build, you got to follow your dreams until it's fulfilled." [laughter and yeahs] And that shit was super-inspiring to me. I was watching *Style Wars*, by myself, in New York really stoned and I had deep, deep moments and then I

went and wrote a song and figured, "Hey, why try and come up with all this new material when there's so much good stuff out there?"

**BD:** What's the story behind the tape machine?

**Ian:** We have a drum machine at our house and we dump it onto tape because I've always made tapes in my life and I thought it's really cool to try and get them as close to each other as possible. It's possible to do cooler shit with tape than with digital things 'cause there's this kind of mystique and you're dealing with magnets. It's not an exact science. It's almost like a chemistry—where digital is exact—and it's bits instead of analogue, so when we let go on a tape and hit play, that's like releasing our spirit animal in a big way. And you hear this large tape hiss that starts up, and then [drum sounds] and the drum machine

"We're Japanther to eat food.  
We go on tour and eat some food."







"This is an  
Art Project  
Banda are  
'fuckin' nerda."

**BD:** Ian, why must we save the whales?

**Ian:** Why are you asking me all these questions? Save the whales? Fuck man, 'cause a lot of humans come from fish and not apes, you know. There's large gaps in our prehistoric history where we only look back. Say the earth is 3,000,000 years old—but I don't believe that—and I think a lot of people come from fish. And I think the ocean is far more vast than we understand, and man is trying to act like they know everything, but whales might be the most intelligent creature on earth. And here we are fucking them up by over-fishing them and doing stupid shit like that. I come from the Pacific Northwest where that's a big issue, where the Japanese are whaling right there.

**BD:** Tell me about Tapes Records.

**Ian:** I started it to put out this band Black Dice that I thought was the best band in New York, at the time, just fuckin' raging spirit blood animal craziness band. Now they're super-popular and doing something totally different. That's super-rad to me, to see my friends doing bands and then do what you can to be a part of the legacy of a band, just because you like it. That's really fun for me. That's something my brother taught me. My brother runs a label called Wantage U.S.A. and that's why I do a record label. It's that same old deal where everyone wants to be like their older brother. I'm not good at it or nothing. I mean, there's sick bands on that label like Bent Outta Shape and xbxrx. So many rad bands, but I'm not good at doing a record label.

**BD:** What does it take to do a good record label?

**Ian:** A lot of hard work. You got to stay home all the time, and we're just traveling all the time like lunatics. You got to be there to send the faxes and I don't even have a fax machine.

**BD:** You talked about the Black Dice and how they got bigger and changed. Do you think there's a point at which things change for bands?

**Riley:** I don't want to talk about it.

**Ian:** Yeah, he hates...

**Riley:** I hate talking about bands, first of all.

**BD:** I'm talking about yourselves, primarily. Is there a point at which you're playing becomes something different?

**Riley:** Sure. Every time we play we become something different.

**BD:** Not play something different.

**Riley:** Every time we play it is something different.

**Ian:** It's wholly the feeling, that's what he's trying to talk about.

is recorded on there in the way that we want, so we can kind of mix, and Matt plays Casio keyboard and writes our melodies and we'll put whatever samples I want to throw on there—or he wants to throw on there, or do things to the beat, and think about—well, it's going to be coming out at a show in stereo for us. And we'll know what's gonna sound good and what's not—but when you press play on that tape, shit doesn't stop after that's rolling, so it's a way of having an element of chance, an element of precision, there's an element of lo-fi.

**Riley:** The tape could get eaten, or the tapes get... I've erased tapes...

**BD:** Do you have back up tapes with you?

**Ian:** No. We just write other songs if that shit happens. Like that's a bummer. Peace. It's a rest in peace thing, man. This band has helped me to understand how to let shit go a little better, 'cause I hold onto grudges and all that type of shit real bad, and when shit gets erased or you lose all these files, or something gets broken, you got to let it go. You got no choice but to try and move on.

**BD:** I'm talking about getting more attention and things like that.

**Riley:** I don't want to talk about it.

**BD:** Nothing to say about it?

**Riley:** It affects everyone in different ways.

**Ian:** I like playing all different types of shows and playing for lots of people sometimes is fun 'cause you can open people's minds. Like, you play a song for someone who's in a bad spot or someone who's really young and then they end up hearing you for whatever reason, just 'cause they were there to go see Mogwai or something, but they hear your song and get psyched by it. Whatever, it's funny. That's it. Bands are boring, though. This is an art project. Bands are fuckin' nerds.

**Riley:** I hate musicians.

**Ian:** We're not musicians. That shit's for nerd-o's. We're doing performance art right here.

**Riley:** It's just expression, and I think it's as natural as drawing and as natural as anything and people put this connotation on it (music) like it's something that people with talent can do. I hate all those differences where people are all like, "I could never draw. I could never be in a band. I could never sing." God, get over it. I don't know that's such a problem with society... like even the concept of singing...

**Ian:** It's glorified to such a problem that we now have Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears. Everyone was so scared that they were just allowed to market and change everyone's opinion's about music, that there's no good music left, no good popular music left. We're lucky when we get thrown a bone like Jet or something, and you're like, "Oh, it kind of rocks." That shit sucks my ass.

**Riley:** But I can listen to it.



**Ian:** But compared to if Bent Outta Shape and Toys That Kill were on popular radio, people would be like, "Fuck yeah. I love that song. That's my favorite song!" It's inspiring me to do something with my life, or do something crazy, or do something weird, and realize that depression is okay and just express yourself to get through it.

**Riley:** I think that's a reflection of a repressive nature, where they don't really want people to use their imaginations that much. That's the problem with television and kids growing up; they're not forced to be creative. Creativity is one of the most important parts of functioning, because it's your soul's outlet, kind of. And when you don't create anything with your life, you really don't have a good life. Even if it's on the smallest level—and that's why people have kids—'cause it's this very strong sense of creation, and I can identify with that.

**Ian:** And that's a lot of people's only creative expression their entire life.

**Riley:** And that's sad, but then you see these people like fifty and sixty when they start getting creative at that age, and you're like, "Well, why did you have to wait until you were fifty?"

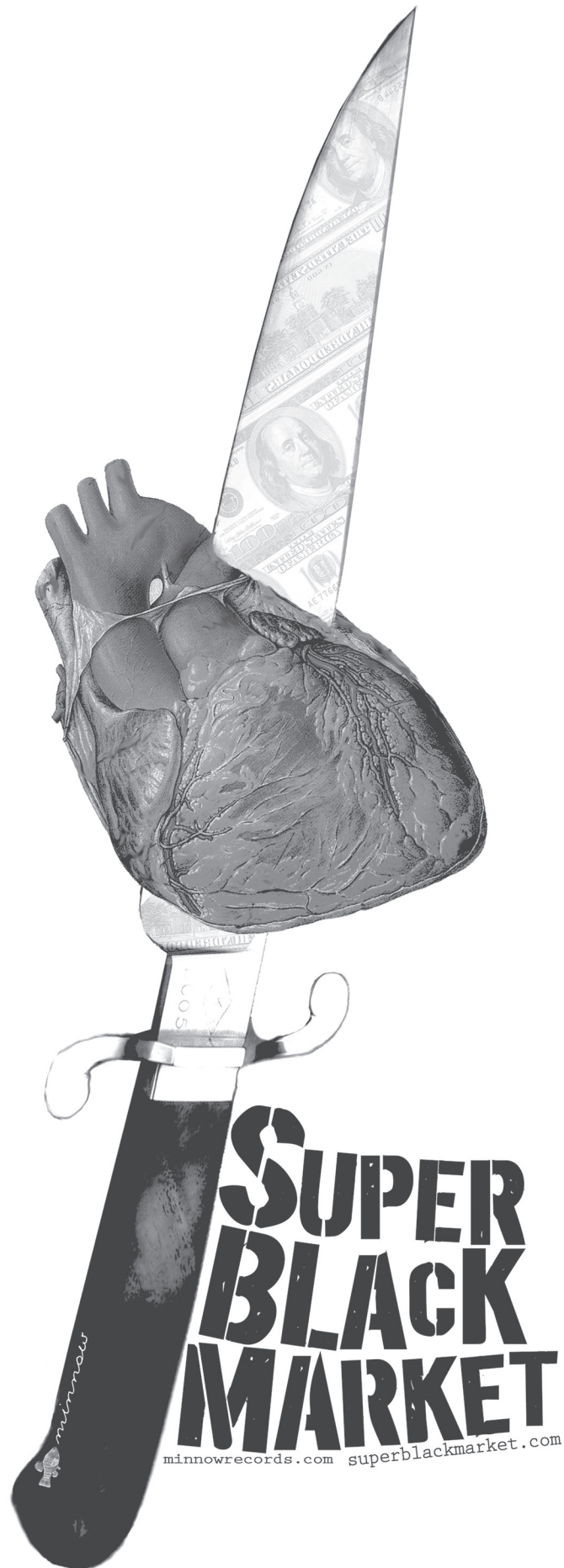
**Ian:** My dad started getting creative right now at about fifty or sixty and he's going off welding shit. He rode his bicycle across the country at sixty. What's up, dad? He's the best dude ever. I think his parents kind of pushed him into what he should do with his life, and his sister told him you should be a lawyer and he was smart enough to do it so he was like, "I don't know what else to do so I'm gonna do what she says." You show up at the office on Monday morning and you get the forms and you fill them out. You don't know what the fuck you're doing. You just don't want your mom and your sister to be dissin' you the whole time you're at your house. So we took into our own hands. This is what we want to be doing, except for we're still not even achieving what we want to be doing. We want to be doing shit, like making our own sets and shows, and making them really special and wild and fuckin' crazy, like shows you've never seen before. Because we have a sense of rock history and we know about all those bands, but, you know, I love records, but I'm not very excited about very many bands.

**Riley:** I hated singing. I used to intentionally get kicked out of chorus and music class, 'cause I was like, "I will not fuckin' sing. Fuck that!" I would not fuckin' sing.

**BD:** Why wouldn't you sing?

**Riley:** I thought it was lame. I was such a hater. I was a big hater. My whole childhood was spent hating on anything. I was just upset and that was the only way I knew how







to react. Being a hater. But also that was because I felt a little bit repressed and I couldn't express myself. And a lot of people express themselves through negativity.

**Rawl:** A lot of that's very popular, too.

**Riley:** Yeah it's super-popular. There's a general tone to life, and to everything. The tone in the '60s was very much influenced by the Beatles or whatever, and you saw how it filtered throughout all of society to where there's these bright colors, and things that penetrated into every aspect of society that created those kind of movements. The energy that existed then—if you look at the tone now where it's slowly kind of lost its contrast almost. Where now it's very minimal beats, and small inklings of tone popping up through, and I think that's probably a good metaphor for where society is at—where there's this driving beat, but the actual tone is very repressed. Then there's a lot of negativity thrown on top of it.

**Rawl:** Where does your love for letters come from?

**Riley:** We just grew up kind of training on graffiti and subsequently got into lettering.

**Rawl:** So were you writing graffiti when you were a negative kid?

**Riley:** Yeah. I started writing graffiti when I was pretty young. There was skateboard graffiti...

**Ian:** I was always into cool logos.

**Riley:** Yeah.

**Ian:** And graffiti is like disguised logos.

**Riley:** Yeah, personal logos.

**Ian:** And for our band we really wanted it to have good design 'cause I love record covers.

**Rawl:** So you guys do all of your own design?

**Ian:** Yeah. We came from an art school in New York—that's where we met—and practiced in the computer lab and could use the photocopiers whenever we wanted. We had a dope logo right when we didn't really have songs. Our songs were so shitty, so bad, that it was awesome, like I was having fun. We used to have access to all this good stuff to work on art work, and silk screen shirts with, and do everything, because we were just going to school and pretty much bored of it...

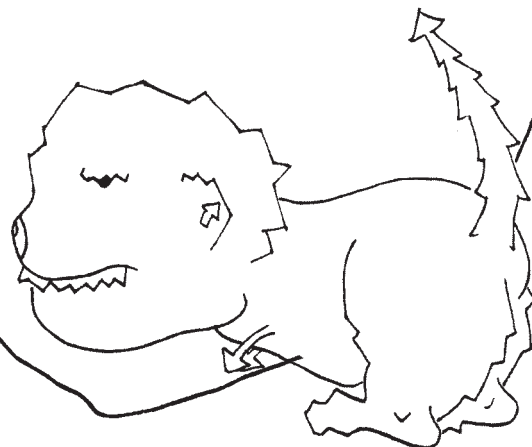
There was no good music in New York at a certain point. Where everyone says this and that about New York, I still thought there were not very many good bands. Like Bent Outta Shape and the Good Good are two bands I really think are doing something interesting, and more long lasting than what the Yeah Yeah Yeahs are doing.

**Riley:** It was like they came up and then just faded away. You hear all that initial hype and then you're like, "Where did they go?"

**Ian:** I think it's not really their fault 'cause that is a good band. The drummer is dope and the guitar player is dope. I like that stuff. But you reach like a second level and then you become... I don't know. They were big as fuck. But you get to a point where people are like, "I know you now." Like, "I can define you and you are this. I have you thumbed down, so I'm moving on right now. I've got to go find some other shit."



"Creativity is one of the most important parts of functioning, because it's your soul's outlet."





# TEENAGE BOTTLE ROCKET

Interview by Mr. Z

Pictures by Mr. Z and Heela

Layout by Uri Garcia

When I was in high school in the early '90s, pop punk was a fresh new start for me and my pals. The bands sounded like all the best '50s and '60s bubblegum pop bands with their ooos and aaas and songs about girls and teenage ridicule, but as heard through distortion pedals and cheap amps. Bands like the Vindictives, the Queers, Screeching Weasel, and many more (in actuality, too many to list) attempted to revitalize the sounds of the Ramones and the Undertones and ended up starting something different. This was largely successful with help from Lookout Records who was, at that time, benefiting from the huge mainstream success of Green Day.

By the time I left high school, Bad Religion, Green Day, and the Offspring were all over the airwaves in pretty much the entire industrialized world, creating a mass tidal wave of interest in the punk sound. By the end of the century (Ramones pun totally intended) and into the new millennium, the term pop punk became a "bad word." If you were hip, you knew that all the worst bands were pop punk or pop punk copycats.

If I mentioned that I loved pop punk, the usual response in 2000/2001 was "You like Blink 182 and Sum 41?" My response would usually involve mass hysteria: "That's not pop punk! Poppy rock influenced by Screeching Weasel, maybe... but come on!" My huffing and puffing, however, convinced no one. Pop punk had gone putrid. Not only are groups like Blink, Good Charlotte, and Bowling for Soup (Who? Yeah. Exactly.) making bank off of the sound through royalties from CD sales and TV commercials, the aforementioned forerunners never even saw a quarter of those profits, almost foreshadowed by what had happened to the Ramones.

In fact, I also recently found out that in circles very different from my own (read: circles where MTV equals music) the term pop punk has for some time stood for "popular punk" (i.e. mainstream punk). When this definition/misconception was birthed I know not, but

it makes for pretty confusing conversations with kids decades younger than me. When I mean poppy-as-hell punk music, they think I mean silver- and gold-selling bands on MTV like My Chemical Romance (who have nothing whatsoever to do with punk and never will).

Thank the heavens something is starting to happen far away from the mainstream pop punk factories and the large camps of Sire and Epitaph. With the help of Recess, Insubordination, Woah Oh, and several other humble operations, pop punk is rearing its head again... only this time it's aimed at no target market whatsoever and it's all going back to the DIY ethic which had spawned its existence. This new wave of underground pop punk has begun a great new chapter for this so-called bad word. Furthermore, the emergence of Red Scare Industries (Tobias Jeg's newfound bedroom label) promoting and helping out some of these great new sounds is only helping with the push to revitalize things. Alongside bands such as Rivethead, the Methadones, and the Copyrights, Teenage Bottlerocket are helping to reclaim and clean up this genre. Thank you! We've been waiting for saviors such as yourselves!

Now, I was scheduled to work late on the night Teenage Bottlerocket played their show at the Galaxy Theatre in Santa Ana, and fearing that we'd end up missing their set altogether, I just up and called in sick. Fuck the man. This was more important! We got there on time, caught their set, and ended up having a wonderful conversation with Ray's wife at the merch booth as the band broke down their equipment. We then headed backstage and through to the parking lot behind the venue and put my tape recorder to good use (before it died mere hours later while transcribing the interview, a good fifteen years after it was purchased). The guys were nice enough to offer us cordial hellos, beers, and a look into the minds of a new-millennium pop punk outfit.

**Mr. Z:** If I were to call you a Ramones-core band... would that make me friend or foe?

**All:** Friend.

**Ray:** These are easy, keep 'em coming! [Laughter]

**Mr. Z:** All right. I'm assuming you like how your full-length *Total* turned out. Were you amazed that a majority of the folks who bought the album *also* dug it? Was it surprising?

**Ray:** It was cool that it got a good reaction from people who are into pop punk music, but while we were recording it, we all shared the mentality of: "If you don't like this, you're fucking retarded." So, I mean, to a certain extent it was surprising that *Total* did really good, but, you know, when *Total* came out, it had been a while since a really good pop punk record had come out that was... that was fun to listen to. I guess. Not to blow my own horn, but that's probably why it did so well!

**Mr. Z:** Has the success of *Total* helped out your previous releases at all?

**Ray:** Yeah, actually. As a matter of fact, we just repressed *Another Way* and it was solely because of *Total*. Otherwise, if *Total* never came out, I don't think we would have ever repressed it.

**Mr. Z:** And I heard the color of the vinyl for *Another Way* wasn't exactly what you thought it was going to be, or something.

**Ray:** Well, the record label is calling it a lip gloss. It's kind of a pink see-through. It's cool.

**Mr. Z:** Okay, so how long after the band's start did Kody join the ranks?

**Ray:** Our first 7" was recorded in 2001 and it came out in 2002. Our first show was around October of 2001. Kody joined summer of 2004.

**Mr. Z:** Oh, so a couple years after you got started then?

**Ray:** Yeah.

**Mr. Z:** Does it irk any of the individual band members when the band is hailed as "ex-Lillingtons' front man's new band?" Or is it cool promotion?

**Ray:** Well I think that the Lillingtons are a great band and obviously people know more about the Lillingtons than Teenage Bottlerocket...

**Mr. Z:** So far.

**Ray:** Well... whenever *Total* came out. 'Cause when *Total* came out is when the "Kody from the Lillingtons' new project" talk started.

**Mr. Z:** Right.

**Ray:** And it was just a way for Toby (Red Scare) and different people to promote the record because they were like, "What kind of credibility does Teenage Bottlerocket have?" And they're just maybe trying to exploit that. But we don't have any bad feelings towards it at all. The Lillingtons have always been the Lillingtons and Teenage Bottlerocket has always been Teenage Bottlerocket. I love both bands and we're definitely not embarrassed. We're stoked. So I never read it and was upset. I always thought it was awesome.

**Mr. Z:** A good association.

**Ray:** Right.

**Mr. Z:** And are the Lillingtons getting back together?

**Kody:** We're doing another record, but as far as anything after that it's all up in the air.

**Mr. Z:** And has it been recorded already?

**Kody:** No. We'll record it when we, um I, get back from this tour.

**Mr. Z:** Pretty hectic. Okay, so, Ray and Brandon are identical twins. Does that ever complicate things with fans? In Europe perhaps?

**Ray:** I don't remember any specific times...

**Brandon:** People just usually call me Ray and I pretend that I'm Ray. [Laughter]

**Mr. Z:** So, how'd you hook up with Toby and Red Scare?

**Brandon:** We just booked our own tours and we were putting out our own records and we booked Gilman Street as part of ten shows on the West Coast.

**Mr. Z:** What year was this?

**Brandon:** Summer of 2004. And um, Davey Jones from Enemy You was there and Ken from Enemy You was there, too, and they're friends with Toby. So they showed him the record and he really liked it and ended up sending us an email saying that he was staring a label and he wanted to sign the band and it was the coolest email we ever got.

**Mr. Z:** Good job, Dave!

**Brandon:** Yeah, good job Davey Jones.

**Mr. Z:** So with certain pop punk bands I always find myself wondering, "Does this male gigolo really know all these girls he is in love with or falling out of love with?" On that note, were "Stupid Games," "So Cool" or any of the other songs about gals on *Total* written for or about certain ladies?

**Ray:** Absolutely. In fact, I think every girl song on *Total* is written



about a specific girl, except for maybe "Radio." "Radio" is just like and anonymous type thing.

**Mr. Z:** Wait, "Radio" is about a girl?

**Ray:** "Radio" is... well it's kind of about a specific situation. Radio is about pretending to like mainstream music—this is the underground meaning behind the lyrics—it's pretending to like mainstream music to impress a girl.

**Mr. Z:** Ahh...

**Ray:** You know what I mean? So a girl likes the Dixie Chicks and you'd be like "Yeah, they're cool," just to try to...

**Mr. Z:** Schmooze...

**Ray:** And to try to advance the relationship. So, the whole putting on a scary movie and realizing the chick's not into it so you turn the lights on and, you know, maybe watch Country Music Television [laughter], or whatever the hell. We're from Wyoming so you get a lot of that.

**Mr. Z:** That's crazy!

**Ray:** Yeah, so we actually refer to girls as songs. Like "Stupid Games" is a girl. And there's a girl: "So Cool." So Cool is a girl. You know?

**Mr. Z:** And it's *that* girl you wrote the song about?

**Ray:** Yeah, when we talk about the girl that he wrote it about we don't call her by her name we call her So Cool.

**Mr. Z:** Okay, which of you were in the Homeless Wonders and did they ever play shows with the Lillingtons?

**Ray:** Brandon and I were in the Homeless Wonders and yes we did.

**Brandon:** The coolest show we played was with the Teen Idols and the Lillingtons at Record Breakers in Chicago during the summer of 1999. And I just remember how excited we were to play in Chicago



# COLORING OUTSIDE

a memoir

## THE LINES

by aimee cooper

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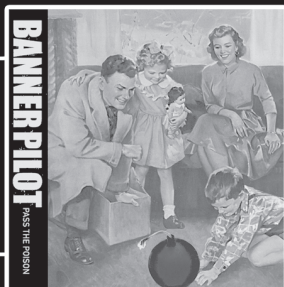
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and on such a cool bill. Playing every night of this tour with the Epoxies I get that feeling again. It reminds me of how excited we were to play that show, only now it's that kind of a show every night at a different city each night. This tour every show's been really cool: how much it would have meant to me then and how much it means to me now. Just thinking about it, it's pretty cool.

**Mr. Z:** I read an online review that said you guys were "Purely DIY for a lack of a big scene..." Is this a true statement? Or do you consider yourself DIY because of different reasons? For example, because that's the only way you'd have it, or because this is the way you want your music heard?

**Ray:** For lack of a better scene? What does that mean?

**Mr. Z:** Well the way I read it is: "These guys live in Wyoming. There's no scene. There's nothing out there, and because there is a lack of an infrastructure where they can benefit from and contribute to, they're doing it themselves." What is the truth?

**Ray:** I think the truth is: do what you can, have as much fun as you can while you're doing it. I mean I can totally relate to the term DIY because we went through so many years doing stuff and now when... like Deborah (the gal who booked the 2006 Epoxies/Teenage Bottlerocket tour) booked this tour, for instance, and we get to go on tour with other bands and we don't have to spend hours on the phone

**"I think everyone in a band should be their own biggest fan."**

and sending out packages and posters to go on tour. If you're not happy where you're at when you're doing it yourself, then you're not going to be happy where you're at when you're not doing it yourself.

**Mr. Z:** Good point.

**Ray:** I mean DIY is definitely something for Teenage Bottlerocket—or any band for that matter that's not worth a shit—can relate to, because you have to. You have to. And as far as being from Wyoming is concerned and whether it is giving us an advantage or not... it's... maybe... who knows? It's hard to say, you know what I mean? I mean people are like, "What's it like being a twin?" And I'm like, "I don't know. I've never *not* been a twin." You know?

**Mr. Z:** Yeah!

**Ray:** What's it like being a punk band from Wyoming? It's like one of those types of questions. I mean I don't know 'cause I've never been in a punk band from anywhere else.

**Mr. Z:** Any other thoughts on that one?

**Kody:** I don't know. I think any band that's starting out has to book their own tours, you know?

**Mr. Z:** Regardless.

**Kody:** Yeah, I mean that's how you do it. And then after a while if you're good, or lucky, or both, then somebody'll take notice and that kind of shit will get a lot easier.

**Mr. Z:** Alright, trivia: whose album was entitled, *We Didn't Come Here to Die* and was this album, in your opinion, just as good as or better than *Total*?

[Silence]

**Mr. Z:** And don't worry if you don't know off the top of your head.

**Kody:** Man, I should know this one...

**Mr. Z:** You're gonna kick yourself in the ass when I tell you.

**Ray:** Zatopeks?

**Mr. Z:** No, but that's a good guess. The Copyrights.

**Kody:** Yeah, I was gonna say the Copyrights.

**Mr. Z:** So, was their debut album just as good or better than *Total*?

**Ray:** I couldn't tell you that 'cause I've never heard it.

**Mr. Z:** You need to hear it. Get a hold of it somehow. In fact, I think they just released a new album this year.

**Ray:** They played in me and Brandon's basement.

**Mr. Z:** Really?

**Ray:** Yeah, I was out of town, though. Yeah, we booked shows in our basement.

**Brandon:** Okay, well in my opinion I don't think their first one was better than *Total*. But you know, I don't wanna talk bad about bands. 'Cause I really like the Copyrights, you know? But, at the same time, I think everyone in a band should be their own biggest fan. I hope the Copyrights think that they're the best band.... and I've always been a fan of what I've been doing. It just makes it more fun.

**Mr. Z:** Otherwise you'll just hate the time you're spending on the band?

**Brandon:** Yeah, and I know the Epoxies feel the same way, too. Tim told me that one time, and I was glad he said that. It's a good thing to be being your own band's biggest fan. So yeah, *Total* beats all the other pop punk CDs that were released that year!

**Mr. Z:** Nice. Hey, Ray, you wanna tell us a little bit about the baby you have coming soon?

**Ray:** My wife is due on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Z:** Congratulations!

**Ray:** Yeah, we're excited. We just bought a house and um... *Total* is paying for the mortgage payment and the baby bills the prenatal vitamins. [Laughter] No, we're really excited, you know? It's awesome. I'm excited to be a dad!

**Mr. Z:** Do you care if it's a boy or a girl?

**Ray:** We're not gonna find out until it's born. I think we both want a boy but if it's a girl I'm still going to be happy. And so will she. So we haven't found out. It'll be a nice surprise. The names we have picked out are either Milo or Maxine.

**Mr. Z:** That's cute! Very nice. Okay, so I noticed you have a new bass player tonight, Miguel. Whatever happened to Joel?

**Ray:** Joel has been going to school playing violin for the symphony orchestra at the University of Wyoming and he got a job playing at a resort in New York.

**Mr. Z:** What? Playing violin?

**Ray:** Yup, and he gets free room and board so he took the job. But he actually just moved to Sunnyvale, which is in California because he's pursuing his career. His real passion has always been playing violin and rock climbing.

**Mr. Z:** Wow.

**Ray:** And we didn't sever our relationship on bad terms. He just wanted to pursue his career and we wanted to keep playing punk music. He went to our show at the Bottom of the Hill (San Francisco). It's just that Miguel is more committed to the band.

**Mr. Z:** I think it worked well with Miguel. He definitely fit right in.

**Miguel:** Well, thanks. [Laughter]

**Mr. Z:** Thanks again guys!

**All:** Thank you!



www.teenagebottlerocket.com





# THE LAST

Sometimes things don't happen in life that should've. This fact of life strikes Memphians whenever the subject of Big Star comes up. To a smaller degree, this rule applies to Angelinos when The Last's album *LA Explosion!* is brought up. Arguably one of the best albums to come out of the L.A. punk rock boom, *LA Explosion!* was also one of the most accessible, with only The Nerves' sole power pop EP (also largely ignored upon its release) giving *LA Explosion!* a run for its FM radio money. Musically, The Last covered the gamut on *LA Explosion!*, from the pop punk of "Slave Driver" to the Beatles ballad-influenced "This Kind of Feeling." And while the music alone had enough hooks to spear listeners' heads to their radios, *LA Explosion!* really gained its strength from principal songwriter Joe Nolte's lyrics. In 1979 (the year *LA Explosion!* was released), few L.A. punk bands had the wit to pen lines like, "Don't give me no jazz about my rock'n'roll 'cause serious musicians ain't got no soul," or the absolute diehard and unapologetic love of pop to write the flooring lyrics to "Every Summer Day." And really, you have to put The Last into their proper context: liking The Beach Boys in hardcore punk L.A. (circa 1979) was a major taboo, making The Last—in my eyes—one of the most punk rock bands in L.A. in the late '70s.

It would be erroneous to say The Last didn't receive just a little bit of recognition before personnel lineups took the wind out of the band's sails. This lack of attention was compounded when the paisley underground, a movement influenced by The Last's synthesis of punk rock with '60s jangled guitars, sprung up three years after *LA Explosion!*'s release. The Last did soldier on and released several albums showcasing Joe Nolte's songwriting ability and the respective musicians in The Last's skill.

The Last was dormant throughout much of the mid '80s and again in the late '90s. However, in the last three years, The Last and their catalogue have been galvanized into action: the much needed reissue of *LA Explosion!* came to fruition in 2003, and even more excitingly, the band is back together and playing from time to time with many of its heyday's key members (Joe Nolte, Vitus Matare, John Frank, Steve Andrews, John Rosewall, and brother Mike Nolte). Lucky for you, lucky for me, it's about time The Last receives just a little bit more of the recognition they deserve.

Interview by Ryan Leach  
Layout by Julia Smut

**Ryan:** I was thinking about this a little while ago—I think with the exception of The Shaggs and The Jackson 5, The Last is the only band to have three brothers or sisters in it, that I can think of right now. So had did that come about? Were you guys all given guitars for Christmas or something?

**Joe:** Actually Christmas figures into it a

little bit of it, but I would have to mention The Beach Boys.

**Ryan:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Joe:** And I don't want to mention the Bee Gees. We're the only band that doesn't start with B though.

**Ryan:** That's true.

**Joe:** I'll try to be concise. As far as the brother thing... the pressure is on; I've got to make it interesting.

**Ryan:** [laughs] Just tell it like it is! It'll be interesting.

**Joe:** When I decided I was going to form a punk rock band, The Ramones record wasn't out yet. Nobody knew what any of the New York bands sounded like. All we knew was there was a scene. In '75, I was lis-

tening to old mid-'60s garage records and stuff and saying, "You know, we need to get back to something like this: get back to what was referred to as 'punk rock.'" Get back to regular rock'n'roll, because the rock scene was dead. It was dead in terms of all the formerly good artists sucked, and there was no place to play: The Whisky was in the process of closing. The Starwood existed—but unless you were somebody who used to sell records in the '60s or early '70s or a cover band—forget it. And it was basically cover bands and that was it. There was literally no way to play original music. And that was the accepted thing. Nobody thought anything about it. And I was like, "Nah, nah, that's wrong." And when I heard about the New York scene—first of all they were calling it "punk rock," I thought, "My God! This is like in alignment with what I'm thinking about!"—and so my idea was to get some kind of band together and figure out a way to get to New York.

I was writing the first set of songs. I had no idea what anything sounded like. The Modern Lovers record came out with regular distribution in the very beginning of '76 and, of course, that was a great record. Okay, yeah... The Modern Lovers, The Stooges and The Velvet. It was interesting, but I started out—I guess like a lot of people did—just making it up: What would I like to hear on the radio? So problem one is where do you play, because there's no place to play. But problem two: how the hell do you trick people into playing this stuff? You know?

**Ryan:** [laughs] Yeah!

**Joe:** You're going to try people out and they're wearing a Chicago T-shirt.

**Ryan:** They already have an 0-2 count right there.

**Joe:** Yeah, exactly. So the big challenge wasn't looking for the perfect musicians—it was looking for anybody who could fake it, who was willing to actually do this stuff. "No, really, I'll buy the beer. It'll be cool." I had a prototype of The Last in the summer of '76. We actually got one weekend at a bar in Torrance called The Flame Pit and we had to do covers of the day to get into it. Terrible songs. So we did that and then the crowd would get drunker and drunker and then we would throw some Stooges at them. And you have cowboys and bikers twisting and dancing to The Stooges and they don't even know.

**Ryan:** They think it's Foghat.

**Joe:** Yeah, right! We thought, "Cool! We can do this." We can turn this into our own little CBGB's. But at the end of the weekend, the guy (bar owner) said, "Yeah, thanks anyway." Okay, plan A didn't work. After that, the drummer stopped answering his door.

**Ryan:** Ouch! That hurts.

**Joe:** I know. So much for that. We found another drummer. He lasted for like six or seven months and then we were just about... the *Back Door Man* people, they were the saviors of the South Bay scene.

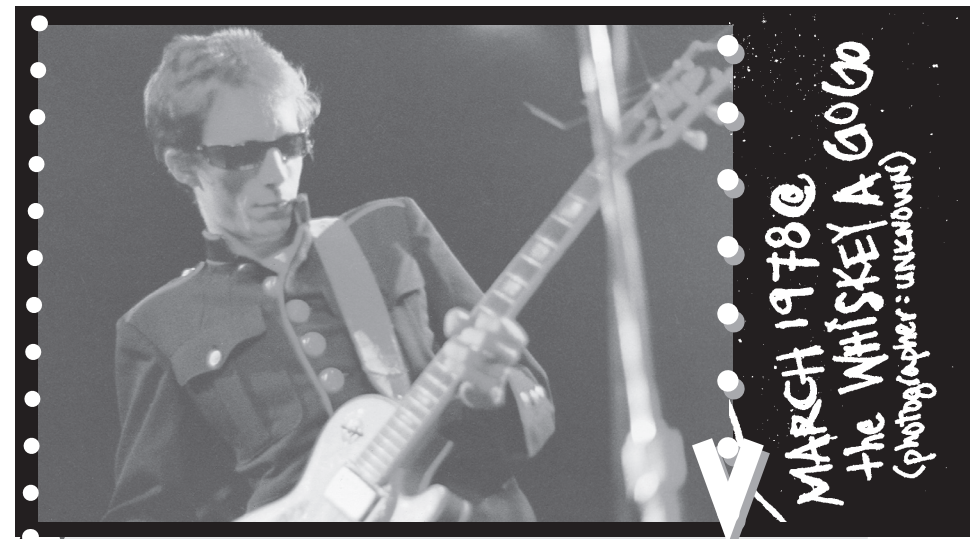
**Ryan:** Phast Phreddie Patterson.

**Joe:** Yeah, Phast Phreddie and Don Waller, and Waller had the Imperial Dogs (Waller's band). They were, in their own way, trying to keep the spirit alive during its darkest days. They, in conjunction with The Zippers, were able to get use, one or two nights a week, of a place called Under The Pier, which is this club under the Redondo Pier. It was really cool. I turned twenty one in '77, but I wasn't twenty one yet. They had their own guys at the door. I would show up and show them my library card. I thought it was really weird that a group who didn't even have a drummer was one of the bands they got. They ended up being The Weirdos. The Alley Cats did it. The

highlight even then was "Nothing Means Nothing Anymore," because I thought, "Man, that's a cool surf riff." Of course I would see them (The Alley Cats) a couple months later when The Masque opened. Unfortunately, my rhythm section left me and so I had to start from scratch. Got the bass player back, found a different drummer: Jack Reynolds, the guy who plays on the first single and the first album, but we had to reinvent the wheel at that time. Our first gig was actually a private party for Buster Keaton's granddaughter.

**Ryan:** Yeah, dude, how did you swing that?

**Joe:** Yeah, that was nutty, man! It was a girlfriend of the girlfriend of our bass player who decided that she was going to be our manager and that lasted a month. It was the end of '76, and she was friends with Debbie Keaton. I was certainly aware of Buster, but I wasn't as huge a Buster fan as I am now, which is probably just as well because I



MARCH 1978 @  
the WHISKEY A GO GO  
(photo:opher: unknown)

the party. Buster's widow was there—"Oh my God!" Years later I see her in an interview and I was just, "Damn! I should have just talked to her for three hours." But yeah, she (initial The Last manager) just said, "You should have a live band at your party, Debbie!" It was weird. That was a crazy fluke, getting that thing. We did that thing and that was it.

Trying to get people to stay in the band long enough to get practiced enough, without falling on our faces onstage—it was just personnel problems. I couldn't keep a band together long enough to play in 1977. That's why there's an over a year gap. By the time we played our first club gig, which was The Masque in January '78, I had hung out with Brendan (Mullen—owner of the renown/infamous L.A. punk club The Masque). I would occasionally baby sit The Masque when he wanted to go to a party or something. There were a handful of bands that might or might not exist that were calling themselves punk rock in the L.A. area in the end of summer of '77. The Germs had just put out a single and Rodney (Bingenheimer, KROQ DJ) was playing that. And The Masque got closed down for three weeks around October of '77. Basically, we were scheduled to play the first weekend they closed it down.

**Ryan:** Like the fire marshals or something came?

**Joe:** Yeah. The fire marshals closed it down the week before we were finally going to play. So okay, that figures—that's our luck. But Brendan was able

"THE BIG CHALLENGE WASN'T LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT MUSICIANS—IT WAS FAKE IT, WHO WAS WILLING TO ACTUALLY DO THIS STUFF..."





THE LAST @ ABBEY ROAD, SAN DIEGO, SUMMER OF 1978.  
LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVID NOLTE, JACK REYNOLDS, JOE NOLTE.  
(VITUS is that head behind David)  
photo: ALEX GIBSON

# THE LAST

to reopen it three weeks later. By that time, there were fifty bands. It was like, all of a sudden, people were doing stuff that just came out of the woodwork: "we can do that." Which was the point of the punk ethos: people who've learned their chops and play really well have gotten so abysmally boring, maybe musicianship isn't the heart and soul of the matter. And maybe it would be—especially because we were talking about rock'n'roll—far more interesting to have people who are just starting at it, who are all new to it.

Brendan was all of a sudden overwhelmed. So we got successively bumped until the earliest we could get in was January of '78. By that time our bass player had threatened to quit several times. Dave Harbison was his name. Great bass player. One of the most natural bass players I think I've ever known. An amazing, amazing player, but problems with committing. Regrettably, he ended up killing himself in 1981.

Otherwise I probably would have gotten him back in the band by now. But that

shit happens. So he was going to do the gig but the writing was on the wall. To preface, I had gotten my brother Mike in the band at the beginning. I had moved to Hermosa basically because of the *Back Door Man* thing. I thought, "Maybe we could make something happen in the South Bay. The South Bay sounds like the coolest place in L.A. right now." That magazine (*Back Door Man*) was there. This was before *Slash* and before *Flipside*. That seemed to be like the only action. So I was like, "Okay, I'll move to Hermosa." My brothers Mike and David are living with my Mom and I moved in with her, ostensibly, to go to school [laughs]. Mike was listening to disco and Dave's got a little surfing friend named Frank Navetta and they're just listening to the usual Zeppelin—whatever's on the radio—and they're all surfing and I was like, "Oh no. I must reform my brothers." So I was like, "Okay, guys, this is what you want to listen to." It took Mike a little while, but Dave and Frank got into it right away. I know in the long run, Frank hates me for doing that to him [laughs]. Frank and

Dave were young enough—they were like thirteen or fourteen, and I did every cool older brother trick in the book, sort of brainwashed them. But Mike, even though it took him a little longer to accept my gentle brainwashing, he was hanging out when we had our first practice at my Mom's garage. And I, just for the hell of it, since he was there, tried singing some stuff (with him) and found out "Wow! Our voices sound okay together. So, okay, you're in!" Mike actually came up with the name of The Last. David and Frank decide to start a little band. And then Frank calls Dave one day in the middle of '77 and says: "No, no, no, we're like the next generation, after The Last. So we're going to be The Descendents!" So that's how that shit came about. The original Descendents was Frank and Dave with two acoustic guitars!

**Ryan:** [laughs]

**Ryan:** "Don't give me no jazz about my rock'n'roll."

**Joe:** Exactly. Exactly. [laughs]

**Ryan:** [laughs] That's one of the greatest lines, Joe.

**Joe:** [laughs]

**Ryan:** I fucking love that line.

**Joe:** I actually did laugh out loud when I came up with that one.

**Ryan:** Do you remember when you came up with that one?

**Joe:** Yeah, that was at the end of '76, actually. Mike (Nolte) had written these words which were verses for "The Rack." He had a lot of lyrics lying around that he didn't have music to and I had the music for the chorus: "Dat...da...dat...dat...da...da...dat...dat." And that had been lying around, not finished. I didn't know what I was going to do with it. And I thought, "Okay, yeah, I'll do a fake Mott The Hoople, boogie-type of rock'n'roll throwback song." And, of course, I was very into the dynamic of "screw serious musicianship." That's what started all this mess.

Funny stuff. So flash forward and we're about to do our gig at the Masque and we have a bass player who's going to bail at anytime. So what happened was, my brother John, who had sort of a musical background, had just bought a bass. So I was like, "John, how would you like to join The Last?" John said, "Yeah, okay." So I started showing him the songs and thought that's my back up—John will be the bass player. And, anyway, John evidently had a change of mind and gave the bass to David for Christmas. So we said, "Okay, I guess David's it!" So the other guy played the show, but we had David sit in for sound check, and sure enough after the show, the other guy quit. "David, you're in the band!" Just by accident, because I was going to grab whoever I could get. And brothers are easier to convince. That's how that happened!

**Ryan:** One of the earliest shows you played was with The Nerves. How far into The Last did The Nerves come to your attention? It had to have been early. You were talking about the Weirdos and I think the Weirdos were convinced to play without even a drummer by Peter Case.

**Joe:** We were certainly familiar with The Nerves. There was the occasional local magazine and the Rodney show and the people you talked to—those were your sources of information. But The Nerves had their little punk palace thing in early '77 or whatever. So I was definitely aware of The Nerves. What we got onto—because we had done a deal with Bomp! to where they were going to reissue our single that we put out ourselves—and Bomp! was putting on two nights at the Whisky, a week or two after that first Masque show, so that's how we got onto that. The Nerves were on that bill. Peter didn't really become a friend until later when he was doing the Plimsouls. Then he joined the drinking club.

"DO IT YOURSELF DOES NOT HAPPEN BECAUSE IT'S SO COOL; DO IT YOURSELF HAPPENS WHEN NOBODY WANTS TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU AND YOU HAVE NO CHOICE..."

**Ryan:** I always thought you'd had something of a camaraderie with The Nerves. They kind of got lost in the shuffle and they stuck out like a sore thumb at that time, looking back at that EP they released and what was going on at that time.

**Joe:** Yeah, they were more pop than we were.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Joe:** A lot of the stuff that never came out—as well as stuff that we would do live—was reasonably thrash music, but on record, you'd not know that. The Nerves were even more so. But they had their sympathies, as ours, that were with the hardcore movement. That's true: it's weird that we didn't hook up. But we were nobodies from the South Bay. We were hesitant to approach the more known bands.

**Ryan:** That's so funny that you call The Nerves a more well-known band. Certainly they're known now, but The Nerves always had the notoriety of being nobody's heroes.

**Joe:** I know. That's so funny. Yeah, I remember we played with Jack Lee at the Troubadour once and on his flyers he actually had to put "Jack Lee—writer of 'Hanging on the Telephone.'"

**Ryan:** I was at Amoeba four or five months ago and I saw one of your "Backlash" singles on the wall. I think it was like seventy-five bucks!

**Joe:** Really? Which one? I want to see if I have any left!

**Ryan:** That's what I was thinking in the back of my mind! I know Peter Case has some of the original Nerves EPs and those things are a fortune.

**Joe:** What did it look like?

**Ryan:** Damn! I can't remember. You know, it was really high up, right as you're going into the blues and the jazz room. The plastic had writing all over it, explaining what it was. I was like, "Fuck, dude, that rules!"

**Joe:** Was it white or red or color?

**Ryan:** I can't remember.

**Joe:** Oh, sorry!

**Ryan:** That's cool. I wanted to ask you: self-releasing a record, not that hard these days. That seemed like more of a challenge twenty-eight years ago.

**Joe:** Yeah, we had to drive to Whittier to find a place that could press the single. And the first single, "She Don't Know Why," we blew our budget on pressing, so we couldn't afford to have labels made, so we only pressed up like 300, but everyone of those titles are handwritten by me!

**Ryan:** That's rad!

**Joe:** Spend an evening just write, write, write. Ahhhhhhh! If my arm falls off someday, it'll be because of that single. [laughs] You do what you've got to do.

**Ryan:** You've already mentioned Bomp!'s Greg Shaw liking The Last. That makes perfect sense. How did you and Greg meet up?

**Joe:** It was difficult to arrange. It was crazy. I was a fan of Greg's writing, like the issues of *Bomp!* that he was putting out, and the things he would write for other magazines. He was saying that we need a new rock'n'roll thing, even before the New York thing was known or really going. And he was articulate. And so I thought, "Greg is somebody I would like to know," especially when I found out he was going to start his own label. This was probably, again, summer of '77 and I had gone to some place downtown to see Devo and The



# THE LAST



MR. T'S BOYL ~ APRIL 2006  
Photo: Kory Lifonjua

Weirdos. Devo was still really, really good. I'm so old I remember when Devo was good. [laughs] I would go to a lot of shows just by myself and ended up hanging out with this guy named Bo Clifford who had just moved out to L.A. from somewhere in the Midwest to work for some company named Bomp! So we're hanging out and I said, "Yeah, I want to get some of my music to Greg Shaw." So he said, "Yeah, send the tape to blah, blah, blah." So we made a tape of one of our practices and sent I it to the appropriate address. Never heard a thing. I guess that means "no." Basically, do-it-yourself happens not because you're trying to be revolutionary. Do-it-yourself does not happen because it's so cool. Do-it-yourself happens when nobody wants to have anything to do with you and you have no choice.

**Ryan:** One of the things about The Last, and this is from reading some of the stuff you've written about The Last on your site—I think it was early '78—to you, it was a "golden period." And you seemed kind of cynical about things after that. Was this on the heels

of the *LA Explosion!* release where you write about going from being the opening band to headlining a lot of shows?

**Joe:** The golden age...

**Ryan:** Like Susana Hoff's bringing you your favorite alcohol...

**Joe:** Oh that was too funny! There was a time... I forget what it was, maybe Jack Daniels. I don't really drink anymore. It was the craziest thing. It was nine in the morning and there's this bottle of whisky on my doorstep along with a note, which I still have. It was fan letter from this girl and I was like, "I wonder if she's cute!" It was nutty. It was totally unexpected. She was a big fan. When we kicked brother Mike out of the band in late 1980 and we were looking for someone to replace him, Susanna wanted to try out, but we didn't want a chick in the band, so she had to start her own band. So we are responsible for The Bangles! I saw their first official gig, opening up for The Descendents in the Valley. And they were great and The Descendents were pretty damn good themselves. I was very impressed with The Bangles, actually. I did have the honor of carrying her guitar after the show.

**Ryan:** Was she playing a Rickenbacker at that point?

**Joe:** Probably.

**Ryan:** You could have had free Rickenbackers for life, man! You should have let her in The Last! She had her own model out. Did you know that?

**Joe:** Good lord.

**Ryan:** Yeah, Rickenbacker put out a Susanna Hoff's model.

**Joe:** Oh my god. With the benefit of hindsight, I would have done everything differently in my life. [laughs]

**Ryan:** [laughs] That's one of the things I picked up on—how many paisley underground guys went through your ranks. I know Steve Wynn tried to join you guys. You were the mavens for the paisley underground.

**Joe:** Yeah, Steve was a nice guy but his voice was too low. It was nothing against him. I think he held a grudge for years for that. I guess I don't blame him. But again, why did we get rid of Mike (Nolte)? That was dumb in the first place. And then I was trying to find someone who sounded just like him. Those bands started and they went up and we went down. Not only did we inadvertently create a scene by exclusion but we saved all of them a lot of heartbreak. [laughs]

**Ryan:** Latter The Last stuff—I only buy vinyl—but even on CD, the SST stuff is tough to find.

**Joe:** Yeah, in theory. I've been to the SST warehouse and they've got copies. Supposedly you can mail order them. The final SST album, *Gin and Innuendo*, came out in 1996. I had reports from people being told that it wasn't an SST album. I called Greg (Ginn) 'cause I needed copies to sell on the road or something and he said, "Oh, yeah." So the main guy who handles that stuff, I went there and he said, "I have both the albums ready to go." I said, "There's three." I had to show him *Gin and Innuendo*. I don't know how accessible that stuff is going to be. I don't really have high hopes. In theory, you should be able to get them. Vitus and I are thinking about doing a retrospective. It'll probably be a small release.

**Ryan:** *Keats Rides a Harley* just came out again. Can you tell me about that?

**Joe:** Oh yeah! That's out!

**Ryan:** Yeah, it kicks ass!

**Joe:** Yeah, The Urinals did that or were they 100 Flowers?

**Ryan:** It was 100 Flowers at that point.

**Joe:** Yeah, they had to do that because they could not get gigs as The Urinals. The clubs just said, "No. We're not putting Urinals on the marquee." They discovered The Meat Puppets because The Urinals would play Arizona in the early days. The Urinals wanted to put together a compilation to help themselves and their friends.

**Ryan:** And Vitus recorded a lot of the bands on the compilation.

**Joe:** Vitus was recording everybody.

**Ryan:** And that lead to you playing with Vitus again for the first time in a decade.

**Joe:** Oh, no, no!

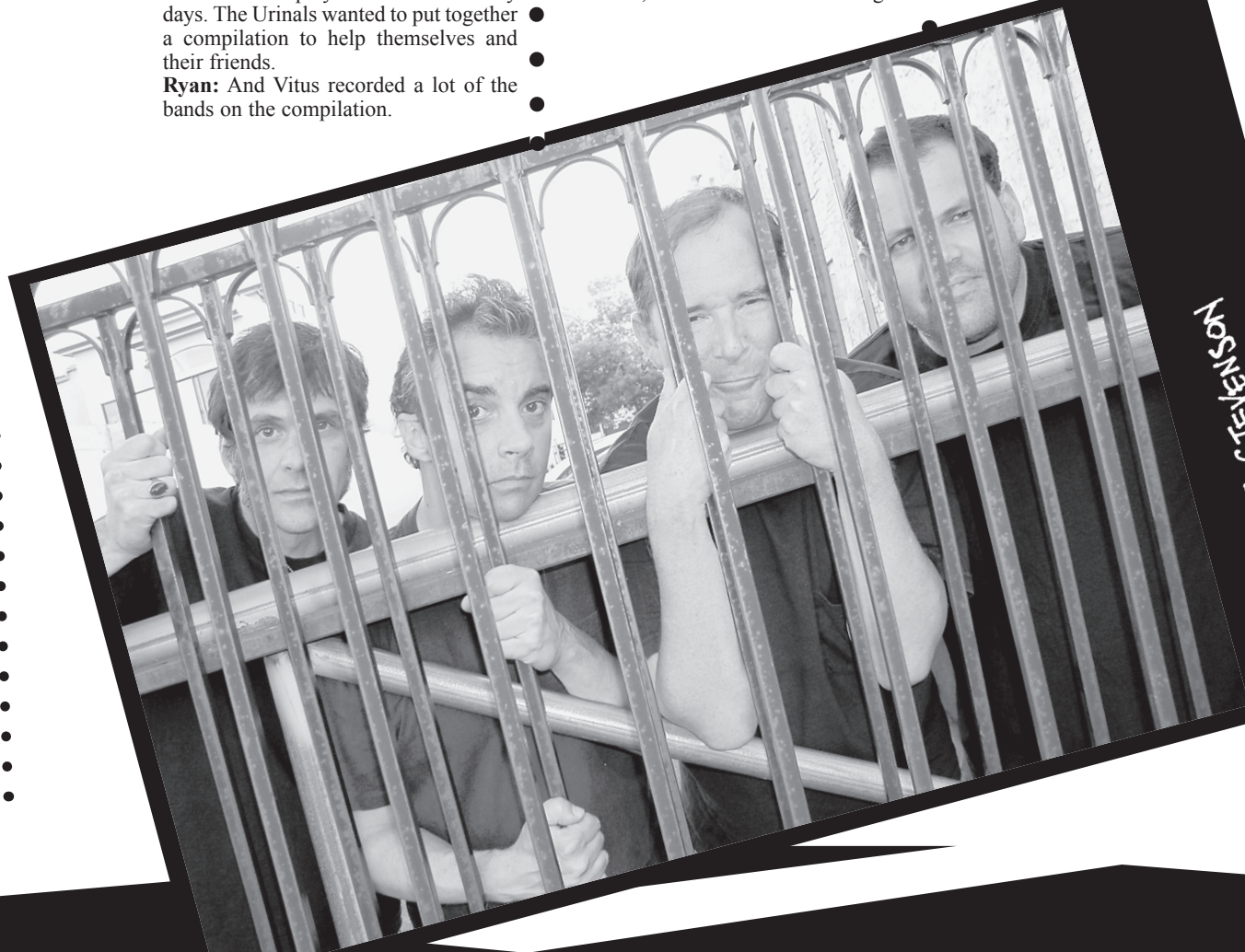
**Ryan:** I meant the reissue. Didn't you do a reissue/reunion show?

**Joe:** Yeah. That was a combination because we had our own Backlash label and in the mid '80s we put out a second label called Warfrat to do our own compilation called *Warfrat Tales*, which had The Urinals and The Rain Parade on it. What happened was the *Warfrat Tale* and the *Keats* albums were coming out on CD at about the same time. And the people at Avebury (Records) who put out the *Warfrat Tales* asked if there was anyway they could get a Last reunion just for one night. The early-to-mid '80s were not kind. And that lineup parted on less than amicable circumstances.

It was one of those things that you're like, "Well, it's probably not going to happen." Vitus is an architect. He hadn't picked up an instrument in over a decade. John Frank, the drummer, hadn't played drums in over ten years; doesn't have a drum set. I emailed the guys to see if the guys were interested. As it turned out, I was going to get Bill (Stevenson) and Karl (Alvarez) (Bill and Karl comprise The Descendents rhythm section) out, but Bill's really busy recording. Then Vitus said, "Well...I can do one song."

**Ryan:** That'll quickly turn to a dozen.

**Joe:** Yeah, so a couple weeks go by. "Maybe we can do two songs!" You have to realize that when I got The Last going as The Last in the fall '76, Vitus had retired as being a musician. He just wanted to record bands, not actively play in them. So I tricked him then! It was about a year before he finally admitted to himself that he was really playing in a band and it's a similar dynamic this time around. It went from two songs, to three songs, to now he's interested in playing the set and he's already gone through two or three keyboards and we're actively pushing for more practices as we speak. We got together to just see how bad it was going to sound and it sounded great. Once again, we have a different perspective. A lot of time has passed and it's just like, "Wow! This is fun!"

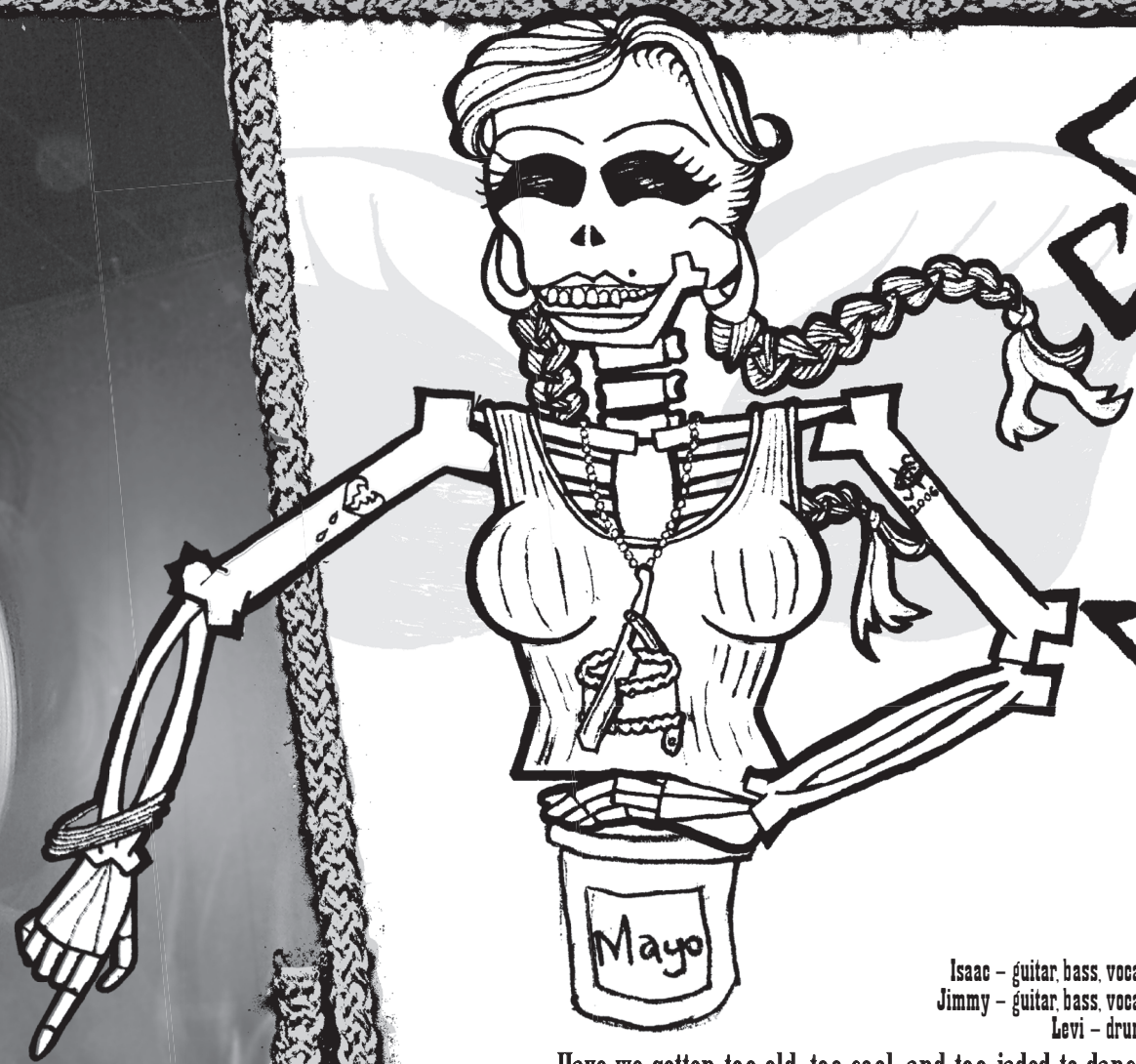


NOSONEELS EICATLS: pepd

# THE LAST



DS PLACE  
 FOOTBALL  
 RUN - GOOD DRINKS  
 POOL TOURNAMENT  
 SHUFFLE BOARD  
 7:30 PM  
 LIVE BANDS



# Swing Ding Amigos

Interview and pictures by Megan Pants  
 Original artwork by Nuvia Crisol Guerra

Isaac - guitar, bass, vocals  
 Jimmy - guitar, bass, vocals  
 Levi - drums

Have we gotten too old, too cool, and too jaded to dance? I'm not talking about keeping the beat and nodding your head here. I'm talking about limbs flailing, heart racing, face beaming dancing. Remember how you used to leave shows covered in sweat and completely spent? But there was something else. Even more powerful than the endorphin high was the joy that comes from giving in to the music, jumping around like a five-year-old, and not giving two thoughts to what anyone else might think.

The Swing Ding Amigos have broken into the mainframe of our collective subconscious. They've temporarily unplugged the insecurities and reconnected the pathway between music and fun. They create a whirlwind of sound likening them more closely to the Tasmanian Devil than the Speedy Gonzalez cartoon they named themselves after. Nothing is constant. Isaac and Jimmy switch lead vocals and their guitar and bass duties. Songs, alternating between Spanish and English, range from real

life experiences to fantasy to things the band itself isn't even sure of. With music alternating between tightly controlled to barely contained, they've established a strong place among some of the best representatives of that loose Tucson sound. And everything they do is just dripping with a raw and dirty sexuality.

So, when The Swing Dings come to your town, go as that younger you. For that set, or even just a song. Don't be afraid to pogo. Don't be afraid to get dirty. Own your happiness. Own that moment. Owe it to the Swing Ding Amigos.

**Megan:** Jimmy, how was the vagina created?

**Jimmy:** God created the vagina, and he got a boner, and that's how it all began.

**Megan:** And what about the Milky Way?

**Jimmy:** After he created the vagina, he fuckin' blew all his McNuggets all over earth, and the vagina was like the vortex and it sucked in the Milky Way. And that's how the galaxy started.

**Megan:** When was the last time you blew up a stereo?

**Jimmy:** I haven't blown up shit. My house was blowin' up a couple days ago.

**Megan:** It was a story with pills and a girl and a fire.

**Levi:** Was it that time you were fucking that girl and her head went through the wall?

**Megan:** That's not how you told it last time!

**Levi:** There was a square piece missing out of the wall, and we were making fun of him that he was fucking Sponge Bob.





**Jimmy:** I'm fuckin' married now, nigga. I'm fuckin' married.  
**Megan:** Are you kidding me?  
**Jimmy:** No.  
**Megan:** Really? To a girl?  
**Jimmy:** No, to fuckin' realgirls.com. Yeah, I got married two weeks ago.  
**Megan:** Do you know this girl?  
**Jimmy:** Only for four years.  
**Isaac:** Does she know you, though?  
**Levi:** She knows him enough to get married. You know why? Because he's a stand-up guy.  
**Jimmy:** There you go. I got somebody on my back.  
**Megan:** Does she know about the stereo and the fire?  
**Jimmy:** The thing was that I fuckin' took a bunch of pills and the girl I was with took a bunch of pills and I don't know how, but we were asleep and my fucking stereo caught on fire. My whole room caught on fire, and I fuckin' threw her out. All my friends came in because there was smoke coming out the vents and shit. Somebody showed up with a bucket of water and I throw it on my

stereo, so there's all these sparks. Next thing I know, everybody's laughing at me because my face is black.  
**Levi:** Before you opened the door, man, I was standing right in front of the door and I opened up the door and all I see are these eyes.  
**Isaac:** It's like that Droopy commercial where he's all like, "Hey Blackie, any more babes in there?"  
**Jimmy:** No, but this is the comedy, man, 'cause I fuckin' walk out of the room, dude, and everybody starts laughing at me and I'm like, "What the fuck?"  
**Isaac:** You were all scared.  
**Jimmy:** I'm all freaked out because I'm drugged up and my room is on fire and there's smoke billowing out of it, the walls are black.  
**Levi:** He was so pissed 'cause we were all laughing.  
**Jimmy:** I'm pissed, dude, I'm fucking livid, and I walk into the bathroom and I turn on the light, I look in the mirror, and my face looks like blackface. I just got a big smile

on my face and went out to face the music. It was a good time. It was funny.  
**Isaac:** I said the Droopy commercial earlier, but I meant the Droopy cartoon. When he's a Boy Scout and the bulldog's a Boy Scout, too. Droopy gets all the chicks and does everything right, so the bulldog sets him up: he burns his building and shit and he's all making these "Help, help!" in a girl's voice.  
**Megan:** Do you watch a lot of cartoons?  
**Levi:** Yes.  
**Isaac:** Tom and Jerry cartoons.  
**Megan:** Did your name come from a cartoon?  
**Levi:** Porky Pig.  
**Jimmy:** No, it was Speedy Gonzalez.  
**Megan:** It was an old one, from the sixties.  
**Jimmy:** It was some bar that he went in, and it was called The Swing Ding Amigo.  
**Megan:** He started a go-go club. It was above Daffy, and Daffy got pissed off.  
**Isaac:** Oh yeah, that's the fucking cartoon.  
**Levi:** Originally, the name was supposed to be Swing Ding Amigo, but it turned into Amigos. Can I reintroduce myself again?  
**Megan:** Yeah.  
**Levi:** [tries to fart]  
**Isaac:** It's just like not getting a boner.  
**Jimmy:** You fucked it up.  
**Megan:** You just disappointed the lady. What about comics? Was it just cartoons or was it comics, too? Because you've got Niñak...  
**Jimmy:** Niñak's a nickname for one of my friends.  
**Isaac:** We used to read comics when we were younger, but Niñak is actually a friend of ours, and growing up—when we were younger, he always had a beard—so we used to make fun of him like he was born with a beard and shit. He's really short; he's got some really short legs and really long-ass arms...  
**Jimmy:** If you see the movie *The Grinch* with Jim Carey, the little grinch? That's Niñak, but brown like a Mexican.  
**Isaac:** With these big-ass white teeth like a werewolf.  
**Isaac:** So, that song's just about like King Kong, or Godzilla, but it's Niñak on top of a building swiping at planes and shit like that, but he's a real, live character.  
**Levi:** He doesn't come out too often. He disappeared after a while. He's...  
**Jimmy:** Like a groundhog.  
**Levi:** He went out with us that night; I guess he didn't see his shadow in the morning.  
**Megan:** Is Feivel a real, live character? How does he almost have sex with a transvestite?  
**Isaac:** It's the *American Tail*.  
**Megan:** The American dream?  
**Levi:** The American dream is shake the *American Tail*, no matter where it's attached.  
**Levi:** That's another character.  
**Isaac:** He's got whiskers.  
**Megan:** And he found someone with whiskers, too?  
**Isaac:** Kind of.  
**Megan:** But, in that story, he almost has sex with a man, right?  
**Jimmy:** Okay, long story short, there's this strip club in Nogales and it's the dingiest...

it's been there for years. We go there and all night there's a rotation of these four fat women.  
**Megan:** So, you're turned on as hell?  
**Jimmy:** We were drinking. I felt like shit. And this fat girl comes up and she's all, "What's wrong?" I'm, "I don't feel good." She's like, "I can make you smile." I said, "No you can't." She said, "I bet you a beer I can make you smile." I said, "No, you can't," because I was so out of it. Anyway, she goes to the back, and when she comes out, this place has this blue tassel. You're sitting at the stage and there's this blue tassel and you see this fat old lady come dancing out all sexy, like back to me, right? She comes out.  
**Levi:** What was she wearing?  
**Jimmy:** Dude, just like a shitty bra and a fucking thong, but I'd rather have a root canal then... anyway, she comes out and she turns around and I swear to god, fucking

**Jimmy:** That and these guys were too young to buy beer, so they'd come over and we'd practice.  
**Isaac:** We're kind of related, too. (Isaac and Levi are brothers, but he's talking about Jimmy here.) My mom's sister is married to his mom's brother and they had a kid together, but they got divorced, so we're not really related, but family functions and stuff.  
**Megan:** So, if you made a skateboarding porn, what would be the name of it and what would you name some of the tricks?  
**Isaac:** *Swiss Barings*.  
**Levi:** *Shuvit Deeper*.  
**Jimmy:** My trick would be the two in the blood, one in the mud.  
**Megan:** What would you call your trick?  
**Levi:** My tricks?  
**Megan:** Not like tricks and hos, but your moves.

"Our music is more influenced by our friends and daily lives than our record collection." How do you explain that?  
**Isaac:** Everyone rips shit off from stuff they like. They rearrange it or whatever. For me, growing up, being a little kid, you hear this stupid commercial and it's really annoying—I'll use that sound effect that I hear—and I try to write a song about it.  
**Jimmy:** If you see one of your friends doing something...  
**Isaac:** Because your friends are the ones that introduce you to new bands. They're the ones who are like, "Check this tape out, dude! I made you this tape with all these cool bands." And you're like, "Aw man, this shit is bad-ass." That's the only reason.  
**Megan:** Do you still have that many friends that make tapes?  
**Isaac:** Not in a while. Our friends know what we like and they'll be like, "Check this

"No. I'm going to put question mark, question mark, question mark because it totally didn't happen. And, I'm gonna put, 'These guys are fucking nuts. I would never take off panties or socks or anything.'" —Megan

true story, she has two matches in her nipple holes and the matches are lit. They're on fire. It was the best.  
**Megan:** Did it make you smile?  
**Jimmy:** Fuck yeah, are you kidding me?  
**Megan:** What about the hair on the neck?  
**Jimmy:** That was imaginary.  
**Levi:** Imagination, *Bareback Mountain* style. Is that what that was called?  
**Jimmy:** *Brokeback Mountain*. It's this gay cowboy movie.  
**Isaac:** What's the line you've been quoting from the movie?  
**Jimmy:** "I wish I could quit on you."  
**Megan:** What's "Do the Smurf"?  
**Isaac:** I always wondered about that because the Beastie Boys have a lyric about doing The Smurf, but I never actually figured out what The Smurf was, so I was trying to see if anyone else knew and could tell us, but that's what it's about. Jimmy broke his arm! Look at his arm!  
**Megan:** You've got a little bump. It's not broken.  
**Levi:** It's a fracture.  
**Isaac:** His arm's got a boner.  
**Jimmy:** I'm not married.  
**Megan:** You're married.  
**Jimmy:** Baby, I'm not married.  
**Megan:** Shut up.  
**Jimmy:** Trust me on this.  
**Megan:** So, you met through skateboarding?

**Levi:** My sweet moves?  
**Megan:** Do you have sweet moves yet?  
**Isaac:** One of my sweet moves...  
**Jimmy:** The Indiana Jones Temple of Poon. I'll go with a backside flapjack.  
**Megan:** How would you define that?  
**Jimmy:** You're hitting it doggy-style, and you hear your nuts clop, clop, clop. You like that?  
[Jimmy starts getting fresh]  
**Megan:** I'm gonna tell your fuckin' wife, dude.  
**All:** Ooooooh!  
**Jimmy:** It's getting cold in this muthafucka!  
**Megan:** That's right.  
**Levi:** You better wear a fucking wetsuit.  
**Megan:** You better wear a fucking Eskimo suit. I'm from Maine, dude. Is there a narrative running through *Kings of Culo* (their Recess Records album) or is it just general overall themes to what you write. Did you write it as a concept album?  
**Isaac:** I think it's just the general overall theme of our life: our friends, adventures, songs about whatever the songs about, or a situation or what we wish was the situation. I mean, if you listen to the Oblivians' records, it's all about the same shit. We're just dudes. We just like stuff that dudes like.  
**Megan:** In an interview in *RocknRoll Purgatory*, you said,

band out." Everybody's got an iPod now.  
**Megan:** I'm so anti-iPod.  
**Jimmy:** You can fit a lot in an iPod, and no one makes tapes.  
**Megan:** I've gotten five tapes in the past two weeks.  
**Jimmy:** That's because you've got *chi-chis*.  
**Megan:** I've got some *sanchos*.  
**Isaac:** Not *sachos*, *chi chis*.  
**Jimmy:** No, she said *sanchos*, not *sachos*.  
**Isaac:** Oh, I get it. Ain't nothing wrong with that.  
**Megan:** What do you guys think about the band the Street Dogs?  
**Isaac:** I've never heard 'em before. They've got Jimmy's name though.  
**Jimmy:** I lived it.  
**Megan:** You lived it?  
**Isaac:** Check out his Air Force Ones.  
**Jimmy:** Check out my Air Force Ones, man. Ain't no fuckin' around with that shit. No, Hector Jaime from the Weird Lovemakers—the OG Street Dog, he's the main nigga of the Street Dogs.  
**Isaac:** Jimmy's known a street dog in Nogales. He's got a Street Dog jacket that he got from one of the dudes in Run DMC.  
**Jimmy:** I roll deep.  
**Megan:** From who?  
**Jimmy:** Run DMC.  
**Megan:** Which one?  
**Isaac:** Uhhh, Mr. C. What does it say on the back?



**Jimmy:** It doesn't say shit.  
**Isaac:** But yeah, that's his name. His street name.  
**Megan:** Street Dog?  
**Isaac:** Zinger Fingers.  
**Megan:** How'd you guys end up on the Warped Tour?  
**Levi:** There's a dude from Phoenix who does AZpunk.com. They put out a comp every year, and they asked us if we wanted to play. We don't really sound like any of the other bands there. They put out a comp every year, and all the bands have kind of...  
**Jimmy:** Similar sounds.  
**Megan:** Do you think that there is a Tucson sound?  
**Isaac:** I think there is, but it's not a specific sound. I think it's just a little more obscure. It can be more experimental. It's not specific, I guess.  
**Megan:** Did you guys actually have an audience, or were people just walking by?  
**Isaac:** We actually got a pretty good slot

are playing in the next room and yells "I wanna get naked!"]  
**Megan:** Why did it take three years for *Mongolita* (their first album) to come out?  
**Isaac:** It was just a weird time.  
**Jimmy:** We had to do shit like...put songs on it.  
**Megan:** Levi, what do you keep in your bass drum?  
**Levi:** Trophies.  
**Isaac:** Naked pictures of dudes.  
**Levi:** I like to say that they're chicks that I did, but it's more like these chicks that get all hot and bothered when I'm playing and they throw their *tongas* in the center of the stage and I throw them inside.  
**Jimmy:** He catches them on his drumsticks and spins them around and shit.  
**Megan:** How'd you get my sock in there?  
**Isaac:** Your sock's in there? Oh, I remember.  
**Levi:** You had to give us something stinky and moist, so you took off your sock.  
**Megan:** That is not true! That's just dirty.

**Levi:** They probably smelled like fettuccine.  
**Megan:** But, Jimmy would've checked in, gotten the panties, and given them to Levi.  
**Isaac:** That was like *Seinfeld*.  
**Megan:** What are some of the reasons you've had the power turned off on you in the middle of playing?  
**Isaac:** We played some of these hippie parties, and they were weird... hippie parties. I'm talking about old dudes who just want to fuck sorority chicks.  
**Jimmy:** Yeah!  
**Megan:** You don't want to fuck sorority chicks?  
**Isaac:** I got a girlfriend, dude.  
**Megan:** If you weren't with Vanessa, would you want to fuck sorority chicks?  
**Isaac:** Fuck no.  
**Levi:** Was that with two feet's toes crossing each other?  
**Isaac:** Nah...I don't know. They're all the same. They're like clones. It doesn't matter. They're just stupid drunk white chicks. I'm

Frosted Flakes, and she would call anything with cereal Pops.  
**Jimmy:** "We have Pops, *mijito*. *Quires* Pops?"  
**Sean Cole:** Growing up, it was "Ay *mijito*" or "*Pobrisito*." That's what I was called as a kid and I'm not fluent in Spanish, but I got called that. Yeah, my name's Sean.  
**Megan:** Do you feel that any form of Mexican music influenced you?  
**Sean Cole:** *Pobrisito*-core.  
**Megan:** At least the cover of *Kings of Culo* was influenced by something specific.  
**Levi:** Norteño music.  
**Isaac:** A lot of Norteño songs are about being illegal immigrants in the U.S. It's all about giving power to the people in Mexico and shit. It's weird because some of them are about drug running and making all this money. And then a bad-ass drug dealer's out to get you, but you shoot him before he kills you and you're the hero.  
**Jimmy:** Like gangsta.  
**Isaac:** Yeah, it's like gangsta rap, but it's fucking polka music, and it's huge down there. They're like millionaires—Los Tigres del Norte are the biggest recording artists in Mexico.  
**Megan:** Since you live in a border town, how do you feel about the immigration bills that are being presented to the legislature?  
**Isaac:** We've never been that political. It's stupid because it's so obviously racist. They're totally targeting the Mexican border. The whole thing about the United States is that it's supposedly the melting pot of cultures. There are going to be more Hispanic people who are all going to vote one way. The white people want them to work here; they just want to pay them less and make sure that they don't vote so that all the white people can vote a certain way, and they can brainwash all the black people to vote a certain way. The whole thing with Mexican-Americans... I've heard this all my life. I've heard that the border patrols, that they were worse than cops. Growing up back in school, you'd be partying, hanging out, and the Border Patrol would show up. It was like, "What the fuck? This is my house. I'm just hanging out outside of my house making out with my girlfriend in the car and you're shining the flashlight in here. I live here." This is high school. I went out with Vanessa in high school, too. But, I had another girlfriend. I love her. [Into the mic] I love you, baby. How do you spell [kissing sound]?  
**Megan:** I think it's spelled v-i-r-g-i-n. Fucking virgin.  
**Isaac:** Except for stuff like that, another way that it was weird is that all of my... my dad had seven brothers and one sister. Out of all of his brothers, except for three, everyone else is in U.S. Customs or Border Patrol.  
**Sean Cole:** They've got the economy down.  
**Isaac:** Exactly. They all make really good

money, but Border Patrols and shit... even my dad, he doesn't work there, but he works for the government agency that's in charge of making sure that everything's working.  
**Megan:** And, it's not even I.N.S. anymore.  
**Sean Cole:** It's privatized and they're going with independent companies.  
**Isaac:** He works for the company that makes sure all of the equipment is running.  
**Megan:** What generation in America are you?  
**Isaac:** My grandparents did (immigrate). My parents were born here. It's just weird because all my uncles are Border Patrol and shit and, years ago, all my family from Mexico, whenever there'd be a party or they needed work or whatever, they'd come by. Even if it was illegal and shit. It's just weird.  
**Sean Cole:** It's just political bullshit.

**Isaac:** Whenever they say that they're taking away all these jobs... you don't want to work doing the jobs that these guys do.  
**Megan:** Especially for that money.  
**Isaac:** Even if they do get paid well—they deserve to get paid really well because they do a good job. They show up early. It's what they do.  
**Sean Cole:** I tell you what, we hired some Mexicans to do some work at the restaurant I work at—and I work with privileged white kids, and they do a shitty fucking job, and they're overpaid in my opinion—the health department gave us a B (all restaurants in L.A. are rated on a A-F letter system that they have to display in their front window), so we hired some Mexicans to come in and clean up the place. They're hard workers. Especially in this area, you've got a reputation of being lazy which is bizarre

**"Yeah, it's like gangsta rap, but it's fucking polka music,"**  
 —Isaac, on Norteño music

because we played pretty early in the day. We played third, and the first band that played were like younger kids. They sounded like they belonged on the Warped Tour, I guess. The PA quit on them.  
**Megan:** I can't quit you.  
**Jimmy:** There were a lot of people passing by, but still, they'd stick around. It was cool.  
**Isaac:** After the second band played, and then we played, and there were actually people there because none of the big Warped bands were playing yet. After us, there weren't that many people at the local stage.  
**Isaac:** After we played, The Riverboat Gamblers played on their Volcom stage. They've got a lot of fans in Phoenix and Tucson, so everyone who was there went to go see them.  
**Megan:** They're also huge fans of you guys.  
**Isaac:** That's another thing. They're playing there next month and they play at this club, Lush—it's like this super hipster place in Tucson. The only time we play there is when they ask us and they say, "These guys are playing with us," which is fucking awesome.  
**Megan:** There's been a lot of that lately. Grabass Charlestons—they play around Gainesville, and then Against Me! got huge and took them on tour and paid them really well. They weren't dividing it any differently than how smaller bands on tour together normally do.  
 [At this point, the door opens and Chachi from Toys That Kill walks in (the interview was being done in his room) and starts talking about the drum and organ that people

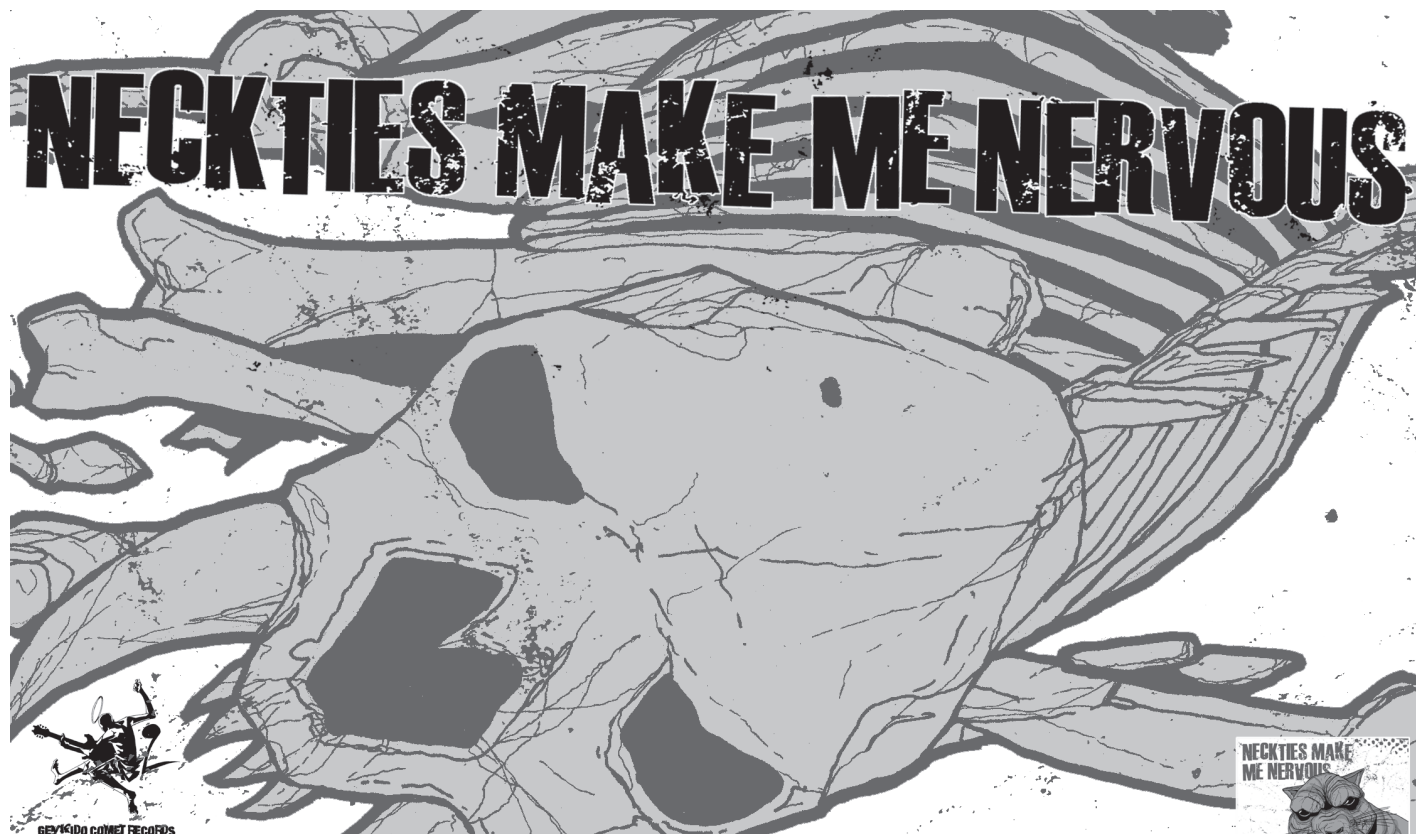
**Levi:** Your sock's in there?  
**Isaac:** Can you put exclamation points in that when you type it out?  
**Megan:** No. I'm going to put question mark, question mark, question mark because it totally didn't happen. And, I'm gonna put, "These guys are fucking nuts. I would never take off panties or socks or anything."  
**Levi:** I'm gonna find your sock in there.  
**Megan:** Apparently I lost my sock, but I still had my shoe, and this dude (Jimmy), put my sock in there. It's creepy as shit. It would be less creepy if it was my stolen underwear.  
**Jimmy:** How the fuck am I gonna be creepy?  
**Niñak:** This guy's the only guy I know who can be covered in shit and get some hot chick.  
**Jimmy:** I had it all, getting married's a mistake.  
**Megan:** Yeah! You're married.  
**Jimmy:** I wasn't at the time. That's a whole different ballgame.  
**Megan:** But you haven't gotten them all at shows.  
**Megan:** When we were in Florida, I stole somebody's jacket because I lost Davey Tilt's hoodie, and I was wasted, so I was just like, "Oh, I need a jacket. This will do." The next morning, I woke up and the pocket was filled with a button-up shirt and women's panties in it.  
**Jimmy:** Did you sniff 'em?  
**Megan:** Maybe a little.  
**Levi:** See, if Jimmy was there, you'd be having Siamese twins right now.  
**Megan:** But, see, I left them on the ground and went to go get pasta across the street and checked out of the hotel; whereas Jimmy...

just not interested in 'em.  
**Megan:** Your girlfriend's completely rad, too. I like her a lot. If I was a dude...  
**Jimmy:** If you were a dude, I'd make a Manwich out of you.  
**Megan:** Have you ever beaten up a jock?  
**Levi:** I beat up a jock because I was defending my friend. This guy was jealous because we would get more girls than them in high school. But, we didn't really get girls. They just thought we did.  
**Megan:** How has poverty made you more appreciative of music and the music that you and your friends play? What I mean is that none of you are "making it." Your friends aren't "making it." How does that actually perpetuate what you do?  
**Isaac:** For me, every time we play, I feel really good because I bought that amp used. I finally have a guitar that I'm proud of. All that shit. We work to get all that shit. We were not given anything. My parents finally accept the fact that we (he and Levi are brothers) play music and that's a big part of my life. Now they do, before they were like, "Get a job." But we have jobs, and we pay our bills and shit. We've been trying to play music since we were really little kids. Since we were kids, it's all we wanted to do.  
**Megan:** How did they come to accept it?  
**Isaac:** They're proud of us. We go out of town. We come here, and they think it's awesome.  
**Sean Cole** [who has joined the steady flow of people walking in]: I'm a cop.  
**Megan:** What's your favorite cereal?  
**Isaac:** My grandma used to call them [in a thick Mexican accent so it sounds like "pahps"] Pops. "Yo *quiren* pops." It could be Kellogg's





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**"Thank god for pulling out.  
Six pumps, pull out." -Levi**

because any Mexicans I've ever worked with are the hardest working people ever.

**Isaac:** That's the thing. Half of these people aren't even fucking Mexican. People from...

**Sean Cole:** ...Ecuador...

**Isaac:** Yeah, they're getting paid five cents an hour. They come here, and even if they make five bucks an hour, which is below minimum wage, they're still making five times as much as they were making back home. They're sending all this money over there. I've been down to see my relatives and

some people's families are working here and they live off of that shit because there's no education. There's uneducated people, they have sex, they have kids. Everybody's got kids and shit down there. We're the Mexicans who aren't married and don't have kids. We're almost thirty years old. That's really rare.

**Sean Cole:** Thank god for punk rock.

**Levi:** Thank god for pulling out. Six pumps, pull out.

**Megan:** Six pumps? I'd be a very disappointed lady.

**Sean Cole:** With these kids, it's ignorance. It breeds poverty. Especially if you use religion as a tool. "This is a sin. Have kids." Have kids, but don't have an education, or good medical care. Be exploited by mostly American corporations. And then you wonder why people are going to go over and get a fucking job?

**Megan:** But beyond that, the fact that half of your family goes on the Border Patrol.

**Isaac:** The only reason they do it is it's an easy thing to get into.

**Megan:** It's a job.

**Isaac:** It's easy. You already speak Spanish. You can talk to people. Just learn these rules and these laws. You get a gun, you get paid a shit-load of money, you get to drive this bad-ass truck all over, you can shoot wetbacks in the back and shit. You're Mexican; the pressure's on you. You've got to treat 'em worse than the fucking white Border Patrol just to prove a point. That's the whole thing: there's a whole bunch of shitty things happening. All the people in Tucson are all over, having these fucking marches and people are burning Mexican flags and stepping on them. Or, they're rioting. Or, they're marching, holding Mexican flags. It's not about fucking Mexico, dude.

**Sean Cole:** It really isn't. The Mexican government is a fucking pile of shit. They're letting Americans rape them and it's all about the people.

**Megan:** It's not that they're letting us rape them...

**Sean Cole:** Not the people, but their government. Everyone's in cahoots.

**Megan:** But they were against it for a while, but then...

**Sean Cole:** It's all lobbying. One guy lobbies for this, and one guy lobbies for that. Next thing you know...

**Megan** [noticing Jimmy's been gone for a while at this point]: Where's Jimmy?

**Isaac:** Probably crying because his heart is broken.

**Levi:** You know how to get him back in here? Start unbuttoning...

**Megan:** I'm sure he'd be here in five seconds. What do you think it is about Nogales that makes bands want to play there?

**Isaac:** There's only so many towns that have a vibrant scene. What if we just watch that movie *Dudes*?

**Megan:** *Dudes* is rad. *Dudes* is awesome.

**Levi:** What is it about?

**Megan:** It's got Ducky from *Sixteen Candles* (Yes, I know it's *Pretty in Pink*. Many beers had been consumed at this point.) They're punks out in the desert.

**Isaac:** Dude! We're punks in the desert. Dude!

**Levi:** Dude! We are dudes! [high fives ensue]

**Isaac:** Dude! Wait, what was the question?

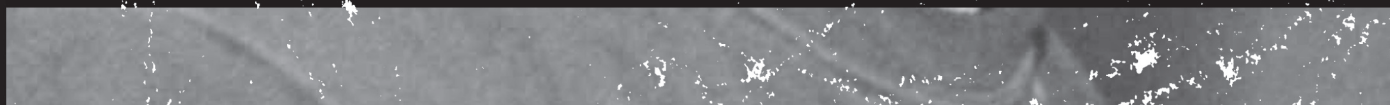






# DIRECT CONTROL.

REMEMBER HOW SHITTY THINGS WERE HARDCORE-WISE IN THE MID-TO-LATE '90s?



How far it had fallen through jock bullshit and quasi religious ridiculousness? How bands like Union 13, F Minus, and even In My Eyes seemed like a godsend for anyone who liked fast hardcore? Unless you were one of the very few folks who was hip to Out Cold back then or you were a fan of grind/powerviolence, it was slim pickins for years.

Then, around the turn of the decade, all of the sudden, there were more good original style hardcore records than I could keep up with. Seemed like every week there was something else great coming out. Bands like D.S.-13, Total Fury, Nine Shocks Terror, ETA, Dead Nation/Tear It Up, Limp Wrist, and Real Shit were just killing. I was loving it and I even started doing a fanzine again after years of disinterest. Then, it started dropping off again: too many bands playing fast for fast sake and tons of tuneless thrash. I started to lose interest again, but, luckily, there were a few bands that still grabbed me. Career

Suicide, Deadfall, Out Of Vogue, Paint It Black, Dead Stop, and the A Team were the top of the pile. I just had to get picky again and really pay attention to find the good stuff.

Then I started hearing about how great Direct Control were. Then they put out a single on Kangaroo Records, a very good sign. Then a 12" on Kangaroo. But could I find them? Hell no!! I was finally able to track down a copy of the *Nuclear Tomorrow* single and was promptly floored. Whatta great single! The *You're Controlled* 12" is even better! Fast—but not too fast—tempos, great guitar tone, and—most importantly—great songs. That is what ninety percent of bands miss out on. A lot of people who hear your band are not gonna get the chance to see you live, so if your record is boring, that's it. I don't care if you're power pop, hardcore, neckbeard folk-punk, or thrash, you are gonna live and die by your songs. Direct Control know exactly what they're doing.



INTERVIEW BY MIKE FRAME | PICTURES BY DONOFTHEDEAD

LAYOUT BY KEITH ROSSON AND TODD TAYLOR

**Mike:** Where did you grow up and what was some of the first music you got into?

**Brandon:** I grew up in North Carolina, in Raleigh, where Corrosion Of Conformity is from. The first bands I listened to were Misfits, Bad Religion, all the gateway punk stuff that everybody else listens to when you first get in to punk. Me and my cousin—who is also in Direct Control, he plays bass—we got into it together when we were twelve or thirteen. Mike, who plays drums in Direct Control, his brother got him into it when he was little.

**Mike:** What were the first shows that you saw?

**Brandon:** Mostly local bands, mostly really crappy bands. You get what you can when you're from North Carolina. COC already sucked by then, too. Nobody was into the really good type hardcore. They were more into the crappier local bands or metal stuff. I guess it makes it better when you're not spoiled with the good stuff.

**Mike:** What was it about hardcore that appealed to you, that made you wanna start playing it?

**Brandon:** The speed, just playing that fast. I was in a lot of faster bands before Direct Control. But it wasn't anything good; it was more like speed metal and grindy stuff. I wasn't really that into it, but you get what you can, you know? That was when I played drums. I just picked up the guitar before Direct Control, really.

**Mike:** You were in Municipal Waste?

**Brandon:** Yeah, that's when I moved here (Richmond, VA). I moved here to play with them. Before Direct Control, the band was called War All The Time. It was me and the drummer. We jammed and then I moved here. We both really missed it, so he moved up here and we started going with Direct Control more. I played with them (Municipal Waste) for three years; did five or six tours, counting all the little shit, like two weeks at a time. I never really quit or got kicked out, it was a mutual thing. I couldn't really get my shit together to do all the stuff they wanted to do.

**Mike:** Did you want to focus on Direct Control more?

**Brandon:** That too. When Waste was about to go to Europe, DC had our first single coming out. We had test presses coming and I just couldn't keep the focus. I wanted to be around for all of that. It ended up being better for me because DC is the kind of music that I like more. Most of the time with metal, it's more gimmicky; people will go just because it's some band playing somewhere. Where as, if you're playing in a real hardcore band, half the time you're playing to people who really understand and really wanna hear your music. That means more to me sometimes.

**Mike:** What was the first HC that you got into?

**Brandon:** Fuckin' Discharge, of course. The *Why?* album. COC, Battalion Of Saints, a lot of foreign stuff like Upright Citizens from Germany. A lot of Japanese stuff. It all hit me all at once and I just wanted to hear it all.

**Mike:** It seems like bands like Career Suicide and you all are drawing from the old sound but injecting your own thing into it.

**Brandon:** Exactly. You gotta have your own sound. That's what I hate about today: a band can be powerviolence or something and people say they sound like Jerry's Kids. [laughs] We just wanna have something that's not too fast, where you can actually have a song; choruses and verses that you can actually hear and make out a whole song. Actually taking the time to write it instead of just blasting away—something with a little bit of melody.

**Mike:** So, you played drums on the new Career Suicide record?

**Brandon:** I play on their new LP called *Attempted Suicide*. It was just something that we had planned a long time ago, me and the guitar player, Jonah, and the singer, Martin. When we first met we just immediately clicked. Me and Jonah would always fool around with the idea, but since I live here, I can't actually be in the band. It was just something for fun and we all knew it would sound good if we did it. Me and my girlfriend got in my small two-door car and drove all the way up to Toronto in the snow. It took us fourteen hours through a lot of detours, a lot of hell, and a lot of stress. But we made it and the record sounds great, so it was worth it. They have a really good drummer but it was just something that we had planned already and it worked out good.

**Mike:** Was it cool for you to play drums? Do you miss it?



**Brandon:** Oh yeah. I am playing drums now in a band called Government Warning. I played guitar on the 7" but our drummer quit. We were gonna break up, but then we were like "Fuck that." We already have a 7" out, people know who we are. We can make this into something better. I had been wanting to play drums anyway, 'cause I missed the shit out of it. I have been playing drums since I was three years old, so I can't just stop and not play drums anymore. Government Warning just recorded an LP. Feral Ward in Portland is gonna put that out. Me and my girlfriend put out the 7" and it's on its third press.

**Mike:** How did Government Warning start up?

**Brandon:** I was skating at this ramp down the street from my house. I met the drummer and we started jamming and it all came together. Then he quit. We just wanted to do something a little bit different. It's not really a side project thing anymore because people are starting to hear it. We were just doing it for fun at first. We always do this shit for fun, of course, but it was cool to get recognized. Once we recorded it, Lauren and I decided we had to put it out. We had just gotten our tax returns. I was trying to put out a record for years and it just fell into our hands. That has paid for a few of our other releases. We've got a few things coming up: the Honor Role '82 on vinyl 7", the *No Bullshit* compilation with Career Suicide, Direct Control, Bad Dirty Hate from Japan, Strung Up, and Government Warning. It's a 7" six minutes long. It's no bullshit. [laughs] We already have our second one lined up for whenever we're ready with that. We're also putting out the Verbal Abuse *We're an American Band* 12". I was talking to Nicki Sicki on the West Coast, and he said he really wanted us to do it, so how can you say no to that, especially for a record that I don't even own 'cause I can't fuckin find it. [laughs]

**Mike:** The two of you run No Way Records, reissuing the *You're Controlled* 12" after Kangaroo Records did the European pressing?

**Brandon:** Yup, me and Lauren run it. We got all of our copies of the 12" when we went to Europe and we sold every one of them over there, in like thirty days. Then there was supposed to be a U.S. pressing on My War Records and that just fell into the ground somewhere. I don't even know. Some sketchy shit happened with that. So, we had this recording and we wanted it to come out the way it was supposed to in the first place. We just put it together and did it. Those are already gone and Feral Ward is gonna do the next



BAD IDEA? BAD IDEA! BAD IDEA? BAD IDEA! BAD IDEA? BAD IDEA! BAD IDEA? BAD IDEA! BAD IDEA? BAD IDEA! BAD IDEA? BA

# HAS IT FINALLY COME? THIS? ENTROSPY

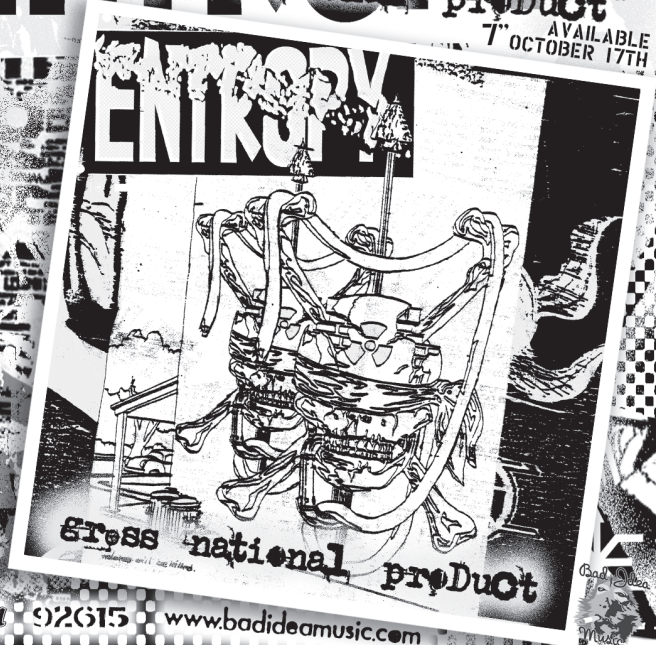
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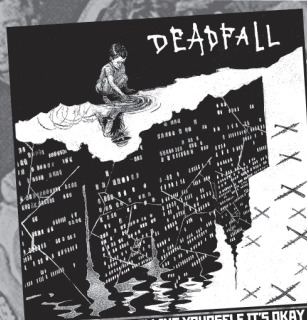
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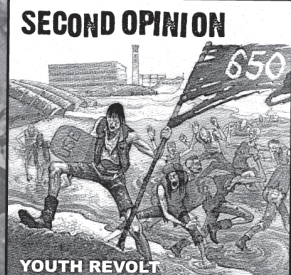
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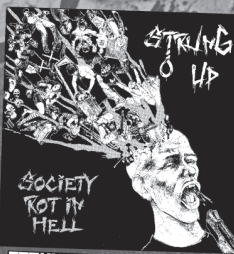
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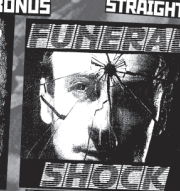
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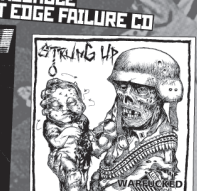
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THEY WERE MORE INTO THE CRAPPIER LOCAL BANDS  
OR METAL STUFF. I GUESS IT MAKES IT BETTER WHEN  
YOU'RE NOT SPOILED WITH THE GOOD STUFF.



pressing. Yannick (Feral Ward) is a really good guy about getting shit done. He doesn't fuck around.

**Mike:** How did you originally hook up with Kangaroo Records for your first single?

**Brandon:** Our roadie for our European tour, Gabby, went over there with Career Suicide. I had given them all demos before when Career Suicide played in Richmond a long time ago. They took it over there and played it for Henk and he just lost his shit. He immediately wrote me and said "I wanna do a 7". So, we were like "Hell yeah. Why not?" I'm pretty sure that everything Direct Control ever does will be issued over there on Kangaroo and on a label over here. He's the real deal. Henk is no bullshit. He loves to party and get down and shit, but when it boils down to it, he loves the music. He'll do anything for the band.

**Mike:** Sorry State Records released your *Nuclear Tomorrow 7"*. Who runs that?

**Brandon:** Daniel Lupton. He does deepfrybonanza.com, now called Dead Metaphor. He's on his third press of that one. He does a really good job, especially for never putting out a record before. He just put it out, bam, here it is. I think that record turned out amazing. He's got some really good shit coming up. He's doing the Koro 7" repress, an official reissue, and the Koro unreleased LP. I've heard both of those and they sound really good. The guitar player for Koro re-mastered it so it's really loud and good. I'm gonna be doing the artwork for the LP.

**Mike:** So, were there different recording sessions for the *Nuclear* single and the other releases?

**Brandon:** We recorded the demo in 2003. We had Ryan from Municipal Waste playing bass. That was thirteen songs and we were gonna use that for a Split LP, but that fell through. When Henk wrote us for a 7" we already had six new songs, so we put the new songs on there. Then we re-recorded all the stuff that is on the *Nuclear 7"* and the *You're Controlled* LP in two days, 'cause we didn't know what we were gonna put on the LP. That's why

those two things sound different; we recorded one on one day and one on the next. We weren't even gonna use *Nuclear Tomorrow*, but then we went back and listened to it a few months later. We were like, "Fuck. This rips. We gotta put it out."

**Mike:** What kind of touring has Direct Control done?

**Brandon:** The first tour we only had the first 7" out. We went out for two weeks in the Midwest and down South. Then we did another one around Chicago Fest. Then we went to Europe

and that's been it, besides weekend shit. We did thirty days in Europe, and we had one day off, I think. We just went out to California and toured with Strung Up. We used their equipment and rode in their van and their cars. It was amazing to see them every night. They were on the verge of breaking up and they kinda told us that we saved 'em, 'cause we had so much fun. I think they just gotta see that people are really into that shit.

**Mike:** How is the local scene in Richmond for shows?

**Brandon:** There's a band called Waste Of Time from Virginia Beach—they're really good—and a band called Cloak and Dagger from Richmond, that we like playing with. Pretty much it's just Direct Control and Government Warning for that style of hardcore. It used to really suck. Ten to fifteen people would come to shows. The shows that I booked, I had to pay all the bands out of my pocket. Then it just started happening out of nowhere that one hundred to two hundred people started showing up. So, I decided to start booking shows again. Regulations came through and there were 250 people there. I got to pay them well and that felt really good.

**Mike:** Do you like it in Richmond as compared to where you grew up?

**Brandon:** Oh yeah, there is stuff going on. I moved here straight from high school. I finished high school early just to come up here and get away from that shit. I know my record collection has grown 40,000 times since I moved here. [laughs] I have come across a lot of good shit here.



HAZORCAKE 67



# BRAD WARNER

Interview by Aphid Peewit  
Photos by Chris Baxter

**Author of *Hardcore Zen*:**

no doctrine to follow,  
no deity's pompous lilly white ass to kiss.  
Just reality to plainly see.

**Y**OU'VE HEARD IT BEFORE, BUT IT'S TRUE: YOU'VE BEEN LIED TO YOUR ENTIRE LIFE. And you're still being lied to. Why, even with your jaunty punk rock perspicacity fully engaged, you are still being sprayed like Marshmallow Peeps with a sugary yellow coating of bull crap. Worst of all, your own mind is one of the biggest and fattest liars of them all. But I tell you this: there exists a kind of bullshit remover that is to punk what genuine Appalachian Mule Kick Moonshine is to Bud Light. It is the high octane stuff, the pure uncut shit meant only for those wild-eyed doubters-of-everything who want to take their rebellion to a level way deeper than even that of GG Allin's atavistic disrespect for proper bowel evacuation etiquette. And it's pretty much tried and true and tested. All but FDA approved. In other words: it works. And it's been around, in one form or another, for some 2,500 years—long before the very first chords of punk were ever struck in crude rebellion—and it's been tinkered with and purified down to its current distillation through all those centuries by a dizzying array of enlightened eccentrics and social outcasts. You probably know it by the name Zen Buddhism and, chances are, everything you know about it is wrong.

Despite what you might think you maybe heard on *Entertainment Tonight*, Zen was not invented by L. Ron Hubbard and it has nothing to do with whatever it is that makes Tom Cruise leap about on furniture, feud with Brooke Shields, or talk about devouring human placentas. (And by the way, are we sure he was only kidding about that?) Zen is also not the sexy esoteric exercises that make Madonna look hot doing the splits in her late forties and it's not a brand name for an array of Buddha-shaped commodities like clocks, key-chains, oven mitts, Christmas lights, and scented soaps. I suppose you could say that it has something to do with the Dalai Lama and the Beastie Boys—but only tangentially. And as much as they'd like you to think, it has zero to do with the feel-goody, corporatized "clarity" that comes to you in a cup of Starbuck's coffee.

Crudely put, Zen is all about "questioning everything"—sage advise supposedly uttered by the historical Buddha himself, Siddhartha Gautama, on his death bed all those years ago. Or, in the words of Brad Warner: "Nothing is sacred. Doubt—in everything—is absolutely essential. Everything, no matter how great, how fundamental, how beautiful, or important it is, must be questioned." And that, kiddies, is a sentiment remarkably close to the original snotty fusillade spit forth from the mouths of Johnny Rotten and the rest of the more genuine voices of the first thrust of punk.

And like Mr. Rotten, Brad Warner means it, maaan. Zen—or Hardcore Zen anyway—has no doctrine to follow, no deity's pompous lilly white ass to kiss. Just reality to plainly see.

So who the hell is this Brad Warner guy?

In a lot of ways, Brad Warner is a fairly typical forty-something punk rock guy. Back in the early '80s, in Ohio, he went by the punk moniker "Brad No Sweat" while playing bass for Zero Defex (0Dfx), a band he describes as "the hardest, fastest, and loudest of the Akron hardcore punk scene." According to Warner, they played songs that were all less than thirty seconds long and were utterly indistinguishable from one another. But the band was big-shotty enough to do shows with the likes of Negative Approach and DRI and was one of MDC's top five personal favorite bands at the time. And like so many bands back in that golden era of hardcore, 0Dfx had their share of hair-raising run-ins with beer-soaked, hate-drunk, knife-wielding halfwits with too much facial hair, who didn't care one lick for 0Dfx's non-Bob Seger-esque flavor of rock'n'roll.

These days, things have quieted down—a bit anyways—and the homicidal hillbilly music critics are gone; though they may have been replaced by angry, dharmawielding mainstream Buddhists. I recently had an opportunity to see Warner bring his Hardcore Zen to the denizens of the Clouds In Water Zen Center here in the Twin Cities and while I personally found his talk entertaining and edifying, there were more than a few ruffled feathers amongst the members of the rather reserved audience. How refreshingly odd it was to see "punk" and "punctilious" clash yet again; in, of all places, a crowd of people supposedly on the path of "awakening."

When Warner isn't busy tweaking uptight Zen people and/or uptight punk people, he plays the part of a fairly typical married guy with a steady job (working on the Japanese Ultraman movies) who makes time every Wednesday night to watch the latest episode of *Lost*. He also spends a good chunk of time each day practicing zazen—the method of "just sitting" meditation that is the meat and potatoes of Zen. Which makes sense because somewhere after the breakup of Zero Defex and his Syd Barrett-inspired garage band Dementia 13, he wound up an ordained Zen Priest named "Odo"—the dharmahair to a highly respected Soto Japanese Zen Master named Gudo Nishijima. And eventually he got around to writing a controversial book called *Hardcore Zen: Punk Rock, Monster Movies, and the Truth About Reality*.

Which is why he wound up having to deal with me.

Being all too familiar with the many fabled stories of gruff Zen Masters of old meting out seemingly harsh verbal reprimands—accompanied by the occasional swat with a stick—I found myself approaching this interview, in the immortal words of Brother Theodore, "sweating like a chunk of rancid pork." But Warner proved to be a congenial sort, only once or twice being annoyed by my sometimes rebarbative or clownish questions. And just as he had done so successfully in his book, he was able to blast away the bullshit like a heat gun. And that's something I can't help but appreciate.

It is my humble opinion that if punk rock folks are willing to listen to the professorial insights of brilliant—but technically "non-punk"—people like Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn, on the socio-political level of human activity, then why not peel back yet another couple layers and see what's even under all that. I don't know much, but I know this: bullshit forms on many levels. So how deep are you willing to go with your own bullshit detector? I mean, c'mon, if you already have your punk rock scuba diving suit on and you're determined to plumb the depths of "Truth with a big T," why not go a little deeper and see just what bubbles up and looks you in the face? If you don't like it, you can always scurry back to the soft, tattooed folds of your womb-like safety zone and listen to whatever the coolest band is and swaddle yourself in all the appropriate punk rock protective wear and forget all about it. Billie Joe Armstrong wouldn't blame you one bit. And, apparently, neither would Brad Warner. As he makes clear in the interview, he's not here to sell you on anything. It's all up to you.

If the idea of staring truth in the face seems a bit much for you, you can always start out by poking around Zen's folkloric outer edges. Zen has as many, or more, fantastic mavericks and shat-upons in its storied history as punk rock does and, really, how can you ignore the allure of that? There's the ghastly leper Seng T'san, the 9 foot giant "Datong," the tiger-faced Ma Tzu, the dwarf Zen Master Shushan Kuangjen, the shouting Lin Chi, Pu Tai the portly laughing mendicant, Ikkyu the perverted scoundrel, Han Shan the giggling hermit-poet and on and on and on. Bodhidharma himself, the legendary figure purported to have brought Zen from India to China, was an eccentric with a fierce disregard for protocol, and whose legs are said to have rotted off as he sat for nine years staring at a wall in deep meditation, "listening to the ants scream." And even Warner's favorite Zen Guy, Dogen, was supposedly born with double pupils in his eyes.

Whenever you have that many weirdos packed into something, you know there's something good there. The same holds true for punk. But don't get transfixed by the wonderful freak show. It's really not about that. That's just me force feeding you what Steve Hagen calls "Zen candy." I'm just trying to entice you into investigating further. Because, I'll admit: I don't really know what the fuck "punk" is about anymore. I thought it was about pulling down the bad wallpaper of bullshit and lies and letting the ugly, jagged, gorgeous truth show through. But I sometimes wonder.

Brad Warner, I think, puts it nicely: "The punks understood that all the social institutions and socially approved codes of dress and behavior were a sham. This is one of the first steps to true understanding. It's unfortunate that not many punks actually followed through to what punk really implied: that all of our values need to be questioned. It's typical for a minority social movement to throw away the accepted rules of society. But they almost always end up just substituting another set of rules for the ones they've challenged... Questioning society's values is a great and important thing to do. But that's easy compared to questioning your own values. Questioning your own values means really questioning yourself, really looking at who and what you believe and who you are."

And if that doesn't sum it up, then—in the words of an ancient Zen Master, you can "cut off my head and make a piss pail out of it."

**Aphid:** Let's suppose you're an attention deficit punk rocker who actually decides to sit down and read this interview, however apprehensively. Right off the bat, what would you say to entice that person to not only keep reading, but to maybe even strike off and look into the whole Zen thing a bit further?

**Brad:** I never try to inspire people, you know? I never worry about that. I'm just saying what I say completely straight and if you want to hear something straight, I'll tell you something straight. And if you want to hear something bent up and twisted around and screwed up and if you want to hear somebody say something that's trying to entice you or trying to hook you into something, then go listen to somebody else, because I don't have time for it. I'm not interested in it at all.

**Aphid:** Are you at all familiar with Eckhart Tolle? His newest book is all about the

**"If 'spirituality' makes you long for far away places and wonderful things and the Great Enlightenment and what have you, then it's probably just a load of crap."**



urgency of people getting enlightened and saving the planet from the violent, unawakened cave people who are currently running the show. I mean, this guy is very definitely trying to entice people down the road of awakening or self-realization or whatever you want to call it, for the sake of the whole planet. You don't feel any similar compulsion, any urgency in that light?

**Brad:** There is a certain degree of urgency. We have to get our asses in gear as a species or else we're going to screw everything up. That's for sure. But everybody's saying that. And most of them, when they say that, will propose a solution that, as far as I can see, is stupid, usually. I mean, I'm not saying anything about the guy you're mentioning 'cause I have no idea what he's saying. But on every side of the fence there can be people saying "We gotta do this and we gotta do that." And fine, there is a certain urgency and I talk about it in the book. But if people aren't interested, they aren't interested and I'm not going to try to convert anybody and I'm not going to try to win them over, 'cause that's just useless anyway.

**Aphid:** But isn't that inevitable almost anytime a person puts their opinions or viewpoints out there in public like you have?



**Brad:** It may be inevitable, but if people start imitating what I say I'm gonna have to change what I'm saying. [laughter] But it's always going to come from the same place. The thing is—people who imitate stuff like that—they don't have any idea what they're imitating, they're just imitating it. They have no idea where it comes from. This is a big problem in Zen. The subject of a lot of Zen stories is the student who repeats the master's words verbatim and the master tells him, "You're full of shit, go away." Even though he's repeated exactly what his master taught. So if you're gonna do that, you haven't got it anyway.

**Aphid:** One of those very Zen stories, which you write about on your website, is the story of Gutei's Finger, where the little boy parrots the Zen Master and then gets his finger cut off for it. And like you say, there are countless other stories and koans in Zen about that. Do you think it's possible for a person to get over-saturated with Zen and all the stories? For example, when you first heard about the severed finger in the Wendy's chili, did you immediately think of the "Gutei's Finger" story?

**Brad:** No, I didn't think about it. [laughs] I didn't make that connection.

**Aphid:** Though Zen is all about self-liberation or whatever you want to call it, is it still possible to get "trapped" by the "trappings" of Zen?

**Brad:** I don't know. If you do the practice of zazen long enough, you start to throw away a lot of the ways you've looked at things. You have these angles that you prefer, these little ways you tend to slot things into your head to try to understand them or you just have various opinions and so forth. And those just kind of slide away. It's not that you lose your personality, but you see your personality for what it is, which is just a kind of useful fiction. But nothing more. And you drop all that, so it's not really a matter of taking on some kind of view. It's a matter of dropping a lot of other views. It's a continual thing. You just have to keep dropping them as they come up and you learn the habit of dropping these things.

**Aphid:** In your book, *Hardcore Zen*, you explain exactly why Kiss's Gene Simmons is not a Zen Master. What do you think about Glenn Danzig as a possible Zen Master? The reason I ask is because the whole reason your book first caught my eye was that I was standing in the book store, in the Eastern Philosophy section, and I saw the picture on the spine of the book that shows you wearing a black shirt with a giant Misfits' skull on it. That was a jolt—I wasn't expecting to see a Misfits' skull in the Eastern Philosophy section. But anyway, weren't the Misfits a big band for you at some point?

**Brad:** Yeah, when I really liked them. We played with them one time. We opened for them in '82 or '83, I don't know. But the flyer for the show is in a book called *American Hardcore*. Which I thought was funny. So we played with them but I didn't talk with them at the time. And I never followed their

career. I mean, I like *Walk Among Us*. I liked that a lot. But after that I didn't really follow them. I had a friend who was a big Danzig fanatic. But I have no idea whether Glenn Danzig qualifies as a Zen Master or not.

**Aphid:** I wouldn't know either. But I have a feeling that if Gene Simmons doesn't qualify, then neither does Danzig. For similar reasons. Just a hunch. Danzig's kind of a meathead in some ways—which is kind of his charm, too, I guess.

**Brad:** Well, that may qualify him more. Gene Simmons is extremely smart and I think his sharpness is kinda what gets in his way. That's the case with a lot of people.

**Aphid:** That's interesting. It's kind of counter-intuitive, on an intellectual level. You would think cleverness would be extremely beneficial. But this concept of "no mind" is very central to Zen, right? I mean, aren't there a lot of famous figures in Zen who were almost considered simpletons before they were enlightened? Hui Neng is considered one of the giants of early Chinese Zen and he was an uneducated illiterate peon who suddenly became enlightened, or so the story goes. And another good example is the Chan Master Hsueh-feng. Before his enlightenment—which I think took some twenty years—he was called a "black lacquer bucket," which apparently was the Chinese way of calling someone a "dumbshit" back in the 800s. But like Hui Neng, he went on to eventually become a highly respected Zen Master. So does it help, in Zen, to be a little bit stupid? I mean, does being bright, in the conventional sense, somehow hamstring you?

**Brad:** There's a lot to be said for stupidity. In Zen, if you're too clever you gotta throw away your cleverness. Clever people are usually very proud of how clever they are. So they have a very difficult time getting rid of that, because it's a very important part of their personality. If you're very clever you might tend to think way too much about everything. I once had a talk with a very clever guy about this koan and he's real into this koan thing. I saw the way he thought about it and I thought, "Wow, that's really bizarre, because you're just so clever." He was examining every word for its possible permutations and connotations. Really, you have to remember these koans were translated from Chinese to Japanese to English, if not a couple other translations in between there. So if you're looking at every word and its permutations and connotations, you're going completely the wrong way. Because those connotations weren't there in the original story anyway. So if you get too clever you get into little games like that and it can be a problem.

**Aphid:** So, theoretically anyway, someone like Paris Hilton might have a better chance at Zen?

**Brad:** [chuckles] I don't know. I don't know about Paris. I mean, there's dumb and there's *dumb*. There's this kind of dull stupidity which isn't good. The stupidity that's good stupidity is a kind of directness rather than

the dull kind of dumbness. I used to work with mentally retarded people—I guess you can't say "retarded" anymore...

**Aphid:** [interrupting] Mentally challenged? **Brad:** Mentally challenged people. I worked for the Summit County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disorders. And I knew some retarded people who were much more sharp than these non-retarded people I knew. [laughter] So there's different flavors of stupidity. So I don't know about Paris.

**Aphid:** You said that you guys played with the Misfits and on your website you mention that MDC was a fan of ODFX—did you ever do a show with MDC? Did you play with any other famous punk bands back then?

**Brad:** I know we did at least three shows with MDC. At one time they were going to do a split EP with us, which I thought was a real honor. But we broke up before it happened. I asked Frank-o to let me play his Precision bass, but he refused 'cause he thought I might wreck it. We also played with Really Red, Meat Puppets, DRI, The Dicks, Negative Approach, The Necros, and The Crucifucks. We were supposed to do a show with Black Flag, but their van broke down on the way.

**Aphid:** That's a pretty impressive list of bands. I am a huge Crucifucks fan. I think they're one of the most over-looked bands from that era. I've heard that Doc Corbin Dart was a bit of a psycho. Did you have any weird experiences with him at all?

**Brad:** I may have met him. I guess I did. I think our singer Jimi Imij may have known him, but probably only through the mail.

**Aphid:** So you had a Zero Defex reunion show in early December of '05?

**Brad:** Yeah, December 10th.

**Aphid:** How did that come about?

**Brad:** A couple of bands were going to reunite. There was a guy who was going to put on a show and he just asked for different bands from the Cleveland/Akron area of that day to come and reform for the show. And we had all been talking about it for a while. This just provided an excuse. So there was like five different bands from that era and that time and place who all got together and played a show. It just seemed like fun. I kinda wanted to do it for a couple years, but I couldn't get anybody into it. Then this came along and now everybody's into it, so there we go.

**Aphid:** Well, how did it go? Any interesting stories? Any fights?

**Brad:** It went very well. There were no fights at all. Everyone got along beautifully. I brought my video camera and interviewed a lot of people from the scene. I'm using those interviews plus the tapes of the show to construct a documentary about the Akron/Cleveland punk scene of the early '80s. Look for it soon. I hope...

**Aphid:** So the whole punk thing, then, isn't something you've left behind, an old skin you've shed?

**Brad:** No, no. I became more punk. To me, Zen is like if you follow punk to its ultimate

“There’s  
different  
flavors of  
stupidity.”



conclusion, what you get is Zen. I guess a lot of people wouldn't understand that. But if you want to be completely straight and throw away all your illusions, then you gotta go all the way. Don't just stop at half your illusions. Go further. So I don't see any big dichotomy or contradiction there.

**Aphid:** It's pretty well documented which Zen figures you admire. What punk people do you admire, if any?

**Brad:** I like Minor Threat, Misfits, Dead Kennedys, Meat Puppets, lots of local bands from Northeast Ohio like The Offbeats, Agitated, Urban Mutants, The Guns.

**Aphid:** I saw a review, maybe on your website, from *Maximum Rock 'n' roll* for *Hardcore Zen* and I was surprised that they didn't rip you to shreds, being that they've always been the stodgy voice of straight-laced orthodox punks—what Jello Biafra calls Fundamentalist Punks.

**Brad:** [interrupting] Are they? I haven't read *Maximum Rock 'n' roll* in years, so...

**Aphid:** Well, they sure the hell used to be, at least. I guess they've lightened up over the last decade or so. But anyway, what was your reaction to the review? Were you at all surprised that, because it was a "Zen book," they didn't eviscerate you for being "mystical hippie shit" or something derogatory and off-base like that?

**Brad:** [dryly] No, I try to stay away from mystical hippie shit. I mean, they gave it a good review so it was nice. My publishers were the ones who decided to send it out to them to begin with. They were just sending it to any kind of punk magazine. The worst thing I would fear from a place like *MRR* is that they would think it's kind of exploitative or I'm just kind of trying to ride on the bandwagon or whatever. But I wasn't. When I wrote the book I thought, "Nobody's gonna publish this thing. Nobody's gonna read it." But I wrote it anyway because I was enjoying



writing it and I was enjoying just spewing all this stuff out on paper. I thought "I'll Xerox this and show it to my friends and see if they laugh." So it surprised me it got published at all, let alone got reviewed. And I'm glad nobody thought it was exploitative or trying to "get hip with the kids." [laughter]

**Aphid:** Well, I suppose I'm not really being fair to *MRR*. It just seems like a lot of punk people have a knee-jerk negative reaction to anything that might show up in their sights as "spiritual" or whatever—which is a label that commonly gets put on Zen. "Spirituality" is a dirty word with punks.

**Brad:** Well yeah, and it should be. I don't like spirituality. I'm not interested in spirituality.

**Aphid:** So if "spirituality" doesn't fit, what term do you use to describe it then?

**Brad:** I don't know—*realism*. I'm not interested in spirituality, I'm interested in realism. I mean, there's two sides to every situation. There's the material side and the so-called spiritual side and you're always in the middle of both and they always co-exist. So anybody who's going into spirituality is going too far to the right and anybody who's into materialism is going too far to the left—or vice-versa, it doesn't matter. You're

just going too far in one direction or another and you're missing the point. So I'm not interested in spirituality any more than I'm interested in materialism. Both sides are just a mistake. I don't like being categorized as a "spiritual teacher" or stuck in the spirituality sections of the bookshops.

**Aphid:** You use the word "realism" a lot and it's a pretty weighty, absolute word. Are you ever concerned that it might come off as being dogmatic?

**Brad:** Well, it's an easily misunderstood word.

**Aphid:** I'm just thinking about people like Ayn Rand and the Objectivists who like to label their own take on reality as "realism."

**Brad:** Well, it doesn't matter. Realism, to me, is just being completely straight about everything and just being honest and being sincere in everything, including your view of reality. So I'm stuck with the word "realism" and if it puts people off, it puts people off. It was a big fight with my publisher; they didn't like me saying anything definite or very flat. So there's always these little lines they inserted every three paragraphs which say "or not" or whatever. And I thought, "Okay, some of that is okay, because you can either believe



it or you can not believe it.” But in a way, the end result sounds a bit wishy-washy to me in some places because you might put people off. And I don’t care: put people off. [laughter] There’s plenty of other books to read. Most of them are crap, but if you want to read crap, that’s fine.

**Aphid:** On your website you mention that you’re working on a second book.

**Brad:** Yeah, I’m working on it.

**Aphid:** Any potential publishers out there at this point?

**Brad:** Yeah, I’m talking to a publisher and I got the contract yesterday. I haven’t looked it over yet. I don’t want to say who it is until I’m sure I’m going to work with them. But yeah, the book is complete. When you do a book there’s always editing that goes on after you submit it to the publisher. So it’ll change from what it is now. But it’s basically finished.

**Aphid:** How does this new one differ from *Hardcore Zen*?

**Brad:** It goes into more depth with the philosophy ‘cause I kind of blew my wad as far as my life story goes with the first book. [laughter] There’s not that many interesting stories to tell anymore. So it’s not so narrative as the first book was. It’s basically about Buddhist philosophy, particularly Dogen, and why Dogen is relevant. Dogen is an interesting character because he wrote his book *Shobogenzo*, in 1253 or whatever it was, and it took 800 years for people to start paying attention to it. It really was a lost book until the late 19th century and then it started to become published and getting popular. And it just keeps gaining steam, which is an amazing thing. So I’m writing a lot about that book and why it’s relevant and why people are picking up on this 800-year-old book. I mean, how many books 800 years old actually have any relevance, ones that nobody read 800 years ago?

**Aphid:** I’ve heard that in the *Shobogenzo* Dogen gives rather detailed instruction in toilet etiquette—down to the proper way to wipe your ass. And you’ve written a fair amount about the Zen of cleanliness—cleaning your room and whatnot. Is Zen really just for clean freaks?

**Brad:** Zen is not for clean freaks. But, you’re right, Dogen devotes a chapter to toilet etiquette. Buddhists were some of the first people in the world to come up with ideas like cleaning your butt thoroughly after you poop or brushing your teeth when these things weren’t necessarily common. When a bunch of monks have to live in close quarters they need to keep clean or no one’s gonna be happy campers. Cleaning up is part of Buddhist practice. All retreats include clean-up periods. It’s important to clean up and organize your stuff. You don’t need to be a fetishist about it. Just keep tidy.

**Aphid:** So what exactly are Dogen’s “9 clay balls” all about?

**Brad:** The clay balls were an early form of toilet paper, from a time when paper was too precious to be wasted that way.

**Aphid:** Is there a title yet for the new book?

**Brad:** No. I’m bad with titles. I haven’t thought of one yet. I wanted to call it *Fuck*

*Off and Die* but I don’t think the publishers would like that.

**Aphid:** I would buy a book called *Fuck Off and Die*.

**Brad:** [laughs] But the rest of the population wouldn’t. Actually, I had an idea to write a book called *Fuck Off and Die* but it wouldn’t be a book about Dogen. It would be a book about how people screw up everything, including so-called spirituality and all that.

**Aphid:** That’s cool. Was he as irked by the (and I’m quoting) “pervasive and relentlessly crass immaturity and obnoxious heaps of puerility?”

**Brad:** Uh, I don’t know. Is that from a review?

**Aphid:** [laughing] Yeah. It’s from a review of *Hardcore Zen* that was in Andrew Cohen’s *What Is Enlightenment* magazine.

**Brad:** Oh, oh—that review, yeah.

**Aphid:** I’m not sure why, but I found that review very amusing.

**Brad:** I think that’s like one of three bad reviews and, of course, it’s because I said bad things about Cohen’s friend Ken Wilber. So of course they’re going to say bad things about me. Or I assume that’s the case. I mean, they’re not gonna “get” a book like that anyway. The people who write for a magazine like *What Is Enlightenment* are not going to get it.

**Aphid:** All in all, you don’t seem too terribly impressed with a lot of these people. Having never read any Ken Wilber, I have no opinion on whether he’s deserving of vilification or not. I know you cover this in the book somewhat, but what exactly was it that tweaked you about Wilber?

**Brad:** Well, he’s a persuasive enough writer to suck you in. And, not to brag about myself, but I should know better than to get sucked in by that. But I did, for about fifteen minutes or whatever it was. And I thought, “That’s pretty strong medicine he’s laying out there.” And it’s not good for you. It’s poison. It’s just saying, “Hey, look at me. Look at how enlightened I am and don’t you want to come and give me money or be my groupie?” [laughter] Or whatever, I don’t know what he wants. But there’s a lot of that going around and I kind of picked up on him. I didn’t use his name in the piece originally and my publishers talked me into putting his name in there, which I did, kind of reluctantly. So it looks like I have this big thing against Ken Wilber. There’s a million guys like that. He just happens to be one of the celebrities, one of the biggies that everybody knows. But there’s guys on all kinds of levels.

**Aphid:** You’re right. They’re everywhere. I don’t know how many of them are frauds, but if you start doing internet searches, you can go from one name to dozens of other names in no time flat—whether it’s Zen guys or Advaita Vedanta guys or whatever. Just plain “enlightenment” teachers. Start with Eckhart Tolle and you’ll see all these other names start popping up: Tony Parsons, Wayne Liquorman, Chuck Hillig—on and on and on.

**Brad:** I’ve never heard of any of them.

**Aphid:** There are oodles of them and that’s just the so-called Neo-Advaita people. So the question then is, with this sea of teachers out there (many of whom are, like your buddy Ken Wilber, persuasive and maybe charismatic), how do you tap into the real thing?

**Brad:** You pay attention to how it makes you feel. If it makes it feel like you’re longing to go there and follow the “great man,” then it’s probably bullshit. And if it says something that’s true, then you may be onto something. But if it makes you long for far away places and wonderful things and the Great Enlightenment and what have you, then it’s probably just a load of crap. That’s what I’d say. It has to be about what’s really here and what’s really real. If it’s about some kind of mystery off in the distance that you may one day uncover, then I’m not interested.

**Aphid:** *Hardcore Zen* gets mentioned in the same breath as Noah Levine’s *Dharma Punx* a lot.

**Brad:** Yeah, yeah.

**Aphid:** Have you read that book and do you have any opinions on it?

**Brad:** No, I haven’t read it. I probably ought to read it ‘cause it gets mentioned with mine so many times. I went to see Noah Levine talk when he came to Santa Monica and he gave a pretty good talk. I was kind of relieved that it was good ‘cause I was thinking, “My god, what if this guy turns out to be terrible and everyone’s associating me with him?” But he was all right.

**Aphid:** Somewhere along the line I saw where you mentioned—and favorably, I might add—J. Krishnamurti.

**Brad:** Right.

**Aphid:** And then I thought I saw something recently on your blog about U.G. Krishnamurti.

**Brad:** Yeah, I picked up some lines by U.G. Krishnamurti and then a bunch of people kind of jumped on that because they’re U.G. Krishnamurti fans. I’ve never read any of his books or anything. He just had some line he said about there not being any enlightenment and I liked it. So what’s the question?

**Aphid:** Oh, I was just curious what you think about some of the more famous Indian sages like the Krishnamurtis, Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta, Poonja, and so on.

**Brad:** I don’t know much about them. I read a bunch of J. Krishnamurti’s books when I was in college and enjoyed them at that time. The last time I picked up something of his I thought, “Uhhhh—this seems almost to be going in the right direction, but kind of slides off into somewhere else occasionally.” So I don’t know. I had a Ramana Maharshi book once and I thought it was pretty good, but that was when I was twenty-three and I haven’t looked at it since. I’m not really a big fan of the genre. When I was in college I looked at a lot of those books because I was looking for something. So I ended up reading them. But most of them didn’t make any great impression; certainly nothing I can really remember or have a good quotable opinion about.

**Aphid:** You identify yourself frequently as a Buddhist rather than a “Zennist.” Why is



**“Faith keeps you going. Doubt keeps you from going off the deep end. You gotta have both.”**

that? Is it a lineage thing—an emphasizing of the direct link back to Siddhartha Gautama?

**Brad:** Zennist? What is that? Gautama Buddha invented this stuff, so I have a debt to him. To say I was teaching something other than what he taught would be a lie. I am part of that tradition.

**Aphid:** I’m not exactly sure what a “Zennist” is myself. It’s just a term—and a rather clunky one at that—that you run into from time to time in Zen books. I always took it to be an attempt, via labeling, to isolate the essence of the Zen experience—or whatever you want to call it—from the religious trappings of Buddhism. But that’s just a guess. I take it it’s not a term you’re terribly fond of.

**Brad:** It just sounds dopey to me. I never use these buzzwords.

**Aphid:** Some people—like Ray Grigg in his book *Tao of Zen*—have suggested that Zen is really Taoism disguised as Buddhism. What do you think of that assertion? What do you think of the theory that much of Zen’s history—especially the early Chinese part—

is a fiction contrived to establish a direct lineage back to the Buddha?

**Brad:** Zen is not Taoism. People say lots of stuff.

**Aphid:** You’re right; people say lots of stuff. So—and this is a serious question—how the hell do you know which people to listen to? Not everyone’s bullshit detector is as finely tuned as yours is.

**Brad:** You know who to listen to by looking for the little mark on the underside of their left elbow. It’s shaped like a spiral and it’s green. If they have that mark you can listen to them. If not, then you must not ever listen to a word they say. I wanna just leave it at that. But, okay, the only way you’ll ever know is to learn to rely on intuition. There’s no secret. There’s no buzz word. There’s no sect they must belong to. Buddha said this in the famous Kalama Sutra:

*“Rely not on the teacher/person, but on the teaching. Rely not on the words of the teaching, but on the spirit of the words. Rely not on theory, but on experience. Do*

*not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. Do not believe anything because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything because it is written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and the benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”*

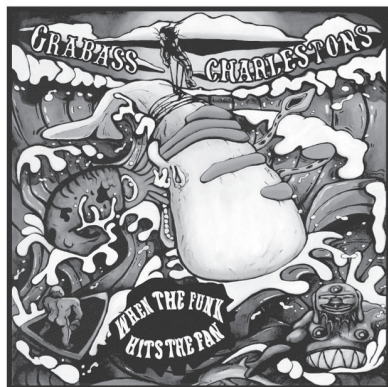
**Aphid:** Does a Zen Master use bug spray when he’s in the woods? Does a Zen Master mow his lawn?

**Brad:** Yes, of course. Unless he or she is stupid and/or a slovenly person. What kind of question is this?

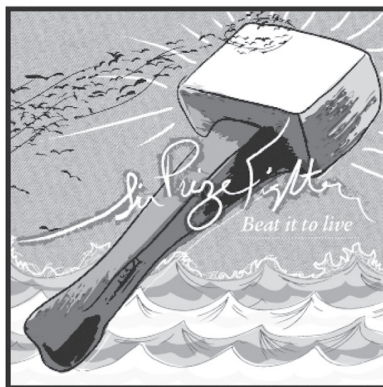
**Aphid:** It’s really just a question I throw in to keep things kinda low brow and loopy-goopy. Just my attempt to trip things up and prevent this interview from taking on the rarefied air of a Ken Wilber/Andrew



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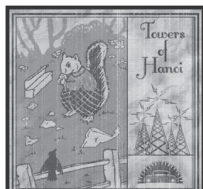
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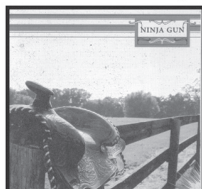
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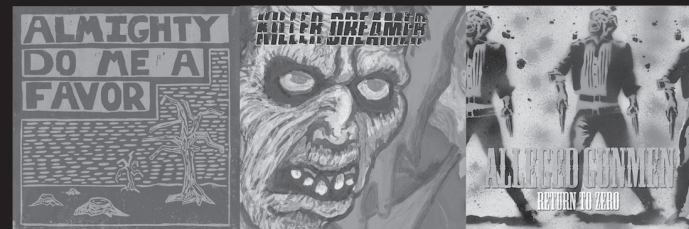
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Cohen type conversation. But it's also, I suppose, a way of asking about your take on letting nature take its course versus trying to control nature. Being that we human beings are part of nature, it can seem to be a tricky question.

**Brad:** Human beings have to behave like human beings. We are part of nature. But we are human beings. If you let your lawn go crazy your neighbors will complain.

**Aphid:** In your book you pretty much pants proponents of so-called "entheogens" and in particular the people involved with the Buddhism and psychedelics book *Zig Zag Zen*. In punk terms, are you a straightedger?

**Brad:** I suppose I'm straight edge. But it's not really a matter of trying to fight off the temptation to do drugs. I just do not like being high. I'm not sure I even get the appeal of that particular activity at all. I've been high before, but never really enjoyed it a whole lot.

**Aphid:** We've touched on drugs and rock'n'roll—where does sex fit in with Zen or does it? Is the proper Zen attitude towards sex one of asceticism? What do you think of Red Thread Zen?

**Brad:** I've never heard of Red Thread Zen.

**Aphid:** I think it's attributed to Ikkyu: sort of a less sexually repressive form of Zen.

**Brad:** Sex is sex. Do it or don't do it. The biggest trouble with sex is that we blow its importance way out of proportion.

**Aphid:** I've heard that in Japan, Ikkyu is a legendary and much loved figure—almost like Paul Bunyan. But he was a randy old wino who preferred sake shops and brothels to monasteries. Some of his poems are downright pornographic, at least by 13th century standards. What do you think of Ikkyu? Is it fair to say that he was the GG Allin of Zen?

**Brad:** I don't know anything about Ikkyu.

**Aphid:** I'm shocked you say you don't know anything about Ikkyu. I know I shouldn't believe everything I read, but from what I've read, you'd almost think that Ikkyu was a mythological figure in Japan on par with Santa Claus or Sponge Bob here in the States. Apparently, there used to be a very popular Anime TV show in Japan based on him. Is your not knowing about him because he was a Rinzai guy and you're from the Soto tradition?

**Brad:** It's just ignorance. My wife was also surprised I did not know. But I was never required to study about him. Or about any other historical figure, for that matter.

**Aphid:** That last question brings up another question or two: what is the relationship between the Rinzai and Soto sects of Zen? I won't go so far as to say it comes off like the Hatfields and McCoys or the Bloods and the Crips—but it does seem like there's a little friction there. Kind of like each one implying—if not outright claiming—to have the "truer" school of Zen.

**Brad:** Dogen had some harsh things to say about the Rinzai school's way of using koans. Recently, some writers have tried to smooth over or apologize for these things on

old Dogen's behalf. But I think his criticisms are valid. Dogen was not, however, critical at all of Master Rin'ai (Lin Chi) himself. Plus, it isn't so easy to divide things up along sectarian lines. There are good Rinzai teachers and lousy Soto teachers.

**Aphid:** Even as a devout Soto guy, you still have to admit that D.T. Suzuki had some of the coolest eyebrows ever, right?

**Brad:** Yes.

**Aphid:** Punk has a well known "kill your idols" attitude. But Zen has a storied history rife with stories of Zen masters burning Buddha statues and referring to patriarchs as old, dried turds and referring to scriptures as ass-wipe. Lin Chi's famous line, "If you see the Buddha on the road, kill him" exemplifies this. Do think, when you get down to it, Zen is even more iconoclastic than punk?

**Brad:** "Kill your idols" and "if you see the Buddha kill him" are pretty much the same sentiment expressed in different ways. When you revere some authority figure or idol, you place yourself below him. In truth, all people are absolutely equal.

**Aphid:** Many remarkable characteristics have been attributed to the beings known as "buddhas." One thing I've heard is that a Buddha—a male Buddha, I presume—has a retractable penis like a cat. Is that true?

**Brad:** My penis does not retract. When I've taken communal baths with my teacher I never noticed his retracting either. I've never heard this. Sounds like bullshit to me.

**Aphid:** Punk has always been popularly linked with nihilism. To some, Zen comes dangerously close to nihilism, to the point where someone just scratching the surface might not discern a difference between the two. What would you say the main difference is?

**Brad:** Zen does not come close to nihilism at all. It's miles away. But it's a popular conception that there is a resemblance. I think it comes from the poor early translations of Buddhist works. All that talk of "nothingness" and the "void." The word "shunyata," which was often translated that way, really means emptying things of your concepts about them. The emptiness they were referring to was a way of coming to the world without any fixed ideas about it. I know punks were big into nihilism as well. But the ones who have survived and thrived were not. I don't see anything nihilistic in Ian MacKaye, for example.

**Aphid:** Hakuin talked a lot about "great doubt" and you yourself have "doubtboy" as an email moniker. What is the role of "doubt" in all of this?

**Brad:** I'm not Hakuin's biggest fan. He had a few pretty kooky ideas. My first Zen teacher used to say that you need equal amounts of doubt and faith. I agree with that. Faith keeps you going. Doubt keeps you from going off the deep end. You gotta have both.

**Aphid:** People have a lot of misconceptions about Zen, as I'm sure you've noticed. Especially here in the West. What

misconception most makes you gnash your teeth? One general misconception I run into is that a lot of people seem to associate Zen with latte-drinking, SUV-driving, well-healed yuppies. That's one of the reasons I liked *Hardcore Zen* so much—on a very basic level, it shows that you don't have to be an Enya fan in Birkenstocks to be into Zen.

**Brad:** It's all misconceptions as far as I can see. I was at Barnes & Nobles just half an hour ago and there was nothing: not a single decent book in the Buddhism section. Not even one. That was sad.

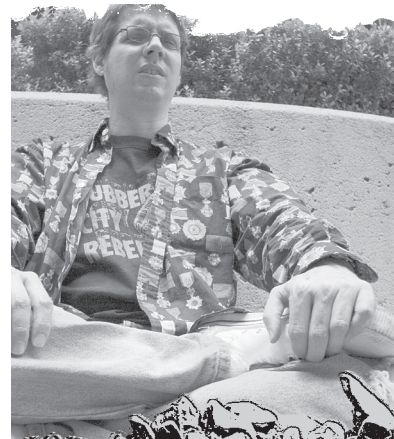
**Aphid:** Is it fair to say that one of the things most central to the "great work" in Zen is the dismantling of one's ego? And, in some ways, isn't trying to get rid of your ego like trying to not have boogers anymore?

**Brad:** You can't destroy your ego. The thing that tries to destroy your ego is your ego and the process you think is its destruction is just building it up more. But you do need to see it for what it is: a convenient fiction that doesn't really matter much in the end.

**Aphid:** The *Hsin Hsin Ming*—one of the most influential and oft-quoted Zen texts—plainly advises to "not search for the truth; only cease to cherish opinions." But punk rockers are some of the most opinionated assholes I know.

**Brad:** A better translation of the first line is, "The True Way is not hard to follow, just avoid picking and choosing." This is much more direct than whether you hold the opinion that The Descendents are better than Romeo Void or whatever. It means being where you are right now, without trying to escape from it. If you wanted potato chips but all there is is broccoli, then enjoy that broccoli like you never enjoyed anything else. And if you hate broccoli, enjoy how much you hate that broccoli. Savor the awfulness of it. People read shitty Zen books and then come after Zen teachers every time they express any preference for anything. "You said you like *Casablanca* better than *Maltese Falcon*! Nyah! Nyah! You're no Zen Master! You've still got opinions! I'm gonna go find someone who doesn't!" Okay. Go away. You're an asshole. [laughter] By the way, I went and saw *Date Movie* tonight. Walked out in the middle. It was really, really, really bad. So I must not be a true Zen Master if I can think that way.

[homepage.mac.com/doubtboy](http://homepage.mac.com/doubtboy)  
[www.hardcorezen.blogspot.com](http://www.hardcorezen.blogspot.com)





# TOP FIVES

## RAZORCAKE STAFF

### Aphid

- Fuckemos, *Can Kill You*
- News of an upcoming full length studio album from Fucked Up.
- Stephen Colbert roasting “Dubya” at the White House Correspondent’s Association dinner.
- Stephen Colbert fucking with Wikipedia and in the process providing an entertaining lesson in epistemology, ethnomethodology, and consensus realities.
- Shaking hands with the Murder Junkie’s infamous “naked drummer” Dino Sex and finding—to my delight/horror—that his hand was sticky like a glazed donut.

### Brian Mosher

- Jimmy Reject, 1970-2006: Punk rock drummer, critic, philosopher and novelist, R.I.P.
- DC Snipers, *Missile Sunset* CD
- Throbbin Urges, Self-titled CD
- Okay Thursday, *Fun in Flats* CD
- Corin Ashely, *From the Brill Bedroom* CD

### Buttertooth

1. Trans Am, *Redline* CD
2. Various Artists, *Old Enough to Know Better*
3. Propaghandi, *Today’s Empires, Tomorrow’s Ashes* CD
4. The Bellakun, *Bendicion Maldita* CD
5. Samhain, *Unholy Passion* 12”

### Chris Devlin

- Top Five Excuses I Could Come Up with for Not Cleaning My House*
1. I have to burn the Brat album *Attitudes* onto CD.
  2. I have to listen to Toys That Kill *Shanked!* again. (I couldn’t clean my house while listening to this album because I was trying to remember all of the words.)
  3. I have to dance around while listening to Otis Redding’s 1961 recording of “Shout Bamalama,” which, in my opinion, is still one of

### Donofthedead

- Tragedy, *Nerve Damage* LP
- Crow, *Bloody Tear* LP
- Municipal Waste/Deadfall, live
- Fucked Up, live
- PESD, *Politikarepoizonekurvae* LP

### Greg Barbera

1. Street Sharks
2. North Topsail Beach, NC
3. Kem Nunn’s book, *Tapping the Source*
4. Finding vintage punk rock videos on You Tube!
5. Gilbert Switzer

### Chris Peigler

- I Object, *Teaching Revenge* CD
- Sick, Sick, Sick, *The Devil Is Real* CD-R
- Code Of Honor, *Complete Studio Recordings 1982-1984* CD
- Rockefeller Horsecollar, *For a Future Tomorrow* CD
- Honor Role, *1982 Session 7”*

### Comrade Bree

1. The Monks, *Black Monk Time*
2. Mix tape exchange clubs
3. Sneaking into the press screening of the *Science of Sleep*
4. Re-reading *Jesus’ Son*, by Denis Johnson
5. Preparation to assist the Reptilian Agenda, in their harvest of the human race at the end of the Mayan calendar in 2012.

### Daryl Gussin

- *I Wish There Was Something I Could Quit*, Aaron Cometbus (book)
- *Scrape the Walls*, Fleshies
- Live on Pirate Radio, Shakey Bones
- “They Tied Up All Our Lace,” Toys That Kill
- Fucked Up, live

### Designated Dale

- Top Five Reasons Why It Sucks Being a Catholic These Days (or Ever) or “Why I Turned in My Catholic Membership Card Many Years Ago”*
- Mel Gibson, Sieg Heil.
  - Having to live under the reign of one of the biggest hypocrites in Los Angeles. Fuck you, Cardinal Mahoney, your name is Cardinal Sin.
  - Michael Stephen Baker and his child-touching ways. Expelled from the diocese, but sure as hell not forgotten, the cocklover (see #2).
  - The do-as-I-say, not-as-I-do philosophy of the Catholic Church.
  - Communion wafers instead of Wheat Thins®.

- which this was a benefit.
- The Brat and Los Illegals at Tia Chucha’s: Nice to see ‘em both out and making a racket again.
  - Los Lobos, *Acoustico en Vivo* CD: No band on the planet can bring the rock and tear through a son jarocho with equal ease.
  - New *Battlestar Galactica* series: Proving that not only are Chicanos in space, they’re in charge.

### Joe Evans

- Bob Ücker, Self-titled CD-R
- Fleshies, *Scrape the Walls*
- Love Songs, *Behind Enemy Lines in G# Minor*
- Tris McCall And The New Jack Trippers, *I’m Assuming You’re All in Bands*
- Lefty Loosie, Their side of a Split 7” in cassette format.

### Josh Benke

1. France Gall, *Laisse Tomber Les Filles* EP
2. The Chanteurs, *The Grizzly Bear 7”*
3. *Ugly Things Magazine*, #24
4. Jack Oblivian, *Black Boots 7”*
5. The Feelers, The Flakes, Carbonas, and Beat Beat Beat live at the Knockout SF.

### Julia Smut

- *Jackass: Number Two* (movie)
- Sugar
- Caffeine
- Chocolate
- Limewire music “sharing”

### Kiyoshi

- Top Five Conspiracy Theories*
- Chem Trails
  - Malevolent alien reptiles controlling U.S. government.
  - Zionist-occupied government.
  - Nikola Tesla assassinated by U.S. government after work on Philadelphia Experiment.
  - U.S. government bombed the Twin Towers to facilitate a war on terror.

### Kurt Morris

1. Rollins Band, *Lifetime*
2. Pelican, *The Fire in Our Throats Will Beckon the Thaw*
3. Silent Drive, *Love is Worth It*
4. Guns N Roses, *Appetite for Destruction*
5. Early Day Miners, *All Harm Ends Here*

### Liz O

- Top Five Live Moments of the Summer*
1. Surviving the summer festival season (even if surviving means blowing dirt out of my nose a week

- after Ozzfest and a Warped Tour sunburn that still hasn’t faded).
2. The Spores at Safari Sam’s. Puppets rock!
  3. Wolfmother at San Diego Street Scene.
  4. World Party at The Roxy.
  5. The Subways at Long Beach Arena.

### Maddy Tight Pants

1. The use of caffeineation to remedy fatigue!
2. Mountain Goats, *The Sunset Tree* CD
3. Marked Men, *Fix My Brain* LP
4. Diane Arbus!
5. *Six Feet Under*

### Mike Frame

- Joan Jett, *Sinner* CD
- New Ducky Boys and Mark Lind CDs
- Yayhoos, *Put the Hammer Down* CD
- New York Dolls, *Even This* CD
- Nikki Corvette, *Back to Detroit* LP

### Miss Namella

- Top Five Live Things: or Touch Me, I’m Gay*
1. The Clorox Girls, Slab City, Killer Dreamer at Little Pedro’s—on their way to their first South American tour, the Portland boys brought the goods with even a special family performance by Justin’s dad (!)—formerly of original L.A. punk scene band, The Defenders.
  2. The Feelers at The Scene—although only five people came out to see them, they were rip roaringly good.
  3. Beat Beat Beat and The Carbonas at The Scene—although only fifty people came out to see them, they were both fucken amazing live bands.
  4. Kent Williams Reception at Merry Karnowski Gallery—As an art show, it was a promise made, kept, and not broken.
  5. Pretty Vicious with Motorcycle Boy at Spaceland—return of Francois and the gang to remind the old-sters just how good they had it, when it was just good and nothing short of it. Local upstarts, Pretty Vicious bring fuzz, feedback, drowning in rock minimalism and rollin’ splendor.

### MP Johnson

- *Burst City*—This movie is like a two-hour long Japanese punk rock cyborg riot.
- Soul Asylum, *The Silver Lining*
- *The Descent*—really is the scariest movie of the year, so far.
- That *Saturday Night Live* skit in

- which Natalie Portman does an expletive-laced hardcore rap about doing drugs and being a thug. Best thing to come from SNL in at least ten years.
- Minneapolis

### Mr. Z

- Top Five Record Labels*
1. Recess
  2. Eat Rice
  3. Snuffy Smile
  4. Asian Man
  5. Alternative Tentacles

### Naked Rob

- Landmine Marathon, *Wounded* CD (Arizona grindcore)
- Model/Actress, *EP* CD (art rock w/David Yow guest vocals)
- Noxagt, Self-titled CD (Norwegian noise rock)
- The Heads, *Under the Stress of a Headlong Dive* CD (stoner/space rock from the U.K.)
- The Come ‘N Go, 2 CD (Swiss punk rock trash blues)

### Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. *Ugly Things Magazine* Presents ...Don’t Bring Me Down. Under: The Pretty Things in New Zealand, 1965
2. *Ugly Things* #24
3. *Equalizing Distort Zine*
4. The Blue Dot (Aaron from Seaweed’s new band)
5. Leather Uppers, live

### Newtim

- Recommended Listens for Getting Dumped*
1. Greg Oblivion & The Tip-Tops, “Twice as Deep”
  2. Reigning Sound, “So Sad”
  3. Kinks, “This Man he Weeps Tonight”
  4. Reigning Sound, “Stormy Weather”
  5. Pointed Sticks, “Out of Luck”

### Puckett

- Top Five TV Shows on DVD*
1. *Firefly*: Sure, a sci-fi western with spaceships and horses sounds like a mess, but damned if it ain’t some of the best shit ever to get cancelled before it finished its first season.
  2. *Wonderfalls*: Speaking of cancelled before finishing a first season, *Wonderfalls* made it six episodes in before it got yanked. I guess television wasn’t ready for a show about a girl who hears inanimate objects telling her to do things.
  3. *The Adventures of Brisco County, Jr.*: Two words: Bruce Campbell. “Nuff said.
  4. *Dead Like Me*: The sharpest, wittiest, and funniest show ever to get cancelled by Showtime. Favorite line at the moment: “He’s the Greek god of why don’t you read a fucking book?”
  5. *My So-Called Life*: It’s out of print now, but who doesn’t enjoy a good cry over the mishaps of Angela, Ricky and Rayanne? Shut the fuck up and pass me a tissue.

### Rev. Norb

1. Beach Patrol, *The Grass Is Only Greener Til You Get There* CD
2. Ka-Nives, *Get Duped!!!* 12”
3. Eugene Edwards, *My Favorite Revolution* CD
4. Chinatown, Self-titled CD
5. Elvis Presley, *56* CD

### Rhythm Chicken

- Top Five CDs I’ve Been Listening to While Working at Leroy’s Water Street Coffee in Ephraim, WI.*
- *The Sound of Music* soundtrack
  - Heino, *The Very Best of...*
  - The Annoying Music Show’s, *The Annoying Music Show CD!*
  - Devo, *Easy Listening* CD
  - Riverboat Gamblers, *To the Confusion of Our Enemies* (after closing time, of course)

### Rob Ruelas

1. Rezurex, *Beyond the Grave*
2. Gutter Demons, *Room 209*
3. Evil Devil, *Devil Scream*
4. Chibuku, *Rock N Roll Is the Devil’s Music*
5. *The Cramps: Live at Napa State Mental Hospital* DVD

### Ryan Leach

1. Peter Laughner, *Take the Guitar Player for a Ride*
2. Namella J. Kim
3. The Monkees (the stuff at the end, particularly the Michael Nesmith songs).
4. Roxy Music with Eno (I officially have no balls).
5. Philip Roth (author)

### Sean Carswell

1. Bent Outta Shape/ Drunken Boat Split 7”
2. Armalite, Self-titled LP
3. Mind Controls, Self-titled LP
4. Teenage Bottlerocket, *Total* CD
5. Marked Men, *Fix My Brain* LP

### Sean Koepenick

- Top Five Shows I Have Seen in the Past Couple Months*
1. Mission Of Burma at The Black Cat in D.C., 7/15/06. Mind numbingly loud and a Floyd cover for Syd Barrett too. Awesome.
  2. The Adolescents, The Street Dogs, The Vacancies at The Black Cat in D.C., 7/27/06. Great sets by all but perhaps Street Dogs may have edged out Adolescents without Frank Agnew on guitar?
  3. Blue Cheer, Dead Meadow, Woolly Mammoth at The Black Cat in D.C., 6/16/06. Stoner rock dream triple bill. Yes, Blue fuckin’ Cheer dominated!
  4. The Howling Mad, Ottley, The Spectacles at Rodeo in Silver Spring, MD, 8/5/06. Power pop overdrive. The Howling Mad featured ex-Razz members. Ottley featured ex-Slickee Boys, Grin.
  - The Spectacles did a nice cover of Tommy Keene’s “Places That Are Gone.” Sweet margaritas too.
  5. Van Morrison at Patriot Center in

- Fairfax, VA, 8/6/06. Great concert and “Gloria” still rips it live.

### Speedway Randy

- Top Five DVDs on Repeat*
1. *Animal Charm, Golden Digest*
  2. Werner Herzog box set
  3. *Tristram Shandy*
  4. *Best of Battle of the Network Stars*
  5. *Wholphin #2*

### Stevo

1. Lemuria (everything they’ve done so far)
2. Blotto/Modern Machines Split 7”
3. Dangerdooom, *The Mouse and the Mask* CD
4. Tegan and Sara, *So Jealous* CD (Yeah that’s right! You wanna fight about it?)
5. Fatlip, *The Loneliest Punk* CD

### Tim Jamison

- Top Five Questions I Get at the Skatepark*
1. “How old are you?” Asked with either disdain or amazement.
  2. “How long have you been skating?” I like to say since noon or so that day.
  3. “How do you ride that big board?” Uh, I just roll.
  4. “Do you like to skate old school?” Huh, I’m just skating. I don’t know what that means.
  5. “How do you keep your speed in the bowl?” It’s all about pumpin’ lil dude, it’s all about pumpin’.

### Todd Taylor

- Fleshies, live and *Scrape the Walls* LP
- Fucked Up, *Hidden World* LP
- Bayonettes, *Stuck in This Rut b/w Sour 7”*
- Clorox Girls, live and *Novocain 7”*
- The Brat, live, twice.

### Travis T.

1. Eugene Mirman, *En Garde Society!* CD
2. The Thermals, *The Body, The Blood, The Machine* LP
3. The Ergs!, *Cotton Pickin’ Minute 7”*
4. The Pine Hill Haints, *Jack of Diamonds 7”*
5. Bryan Lee O’Malley, *Scott Pilgrim & The Infinite Sadness* (Comic)

### Ty Stranglehold

- Top Five Songs About Food*
1. “I Like Food,” Descendents
  2. “Fast Food Diet” The Faction
  3. “Beef Bologna,” Fear
  4. “Mr. Bar-B-Que,” Guttermouth
  5. “Rosa’s,” Smut Peddlers

### Uri G.

1. Blue Oyster Cult, Self-titled, *Tyranny and Mutation*
2. Celtic Frost, *Monotheist*
3. Phil Hendrie
4. Testors, *Complete Recordings 1976-79*
5. Thin Lizzy (entire catalog), way too loud at work!

“He’s the Greek god of ‘Why don’t you read a fucking book?’” is in Puckett’s list



Hey! Person putting your  
reviewable in the mail:  
full album art is required  
for review.  
Pre-releases go into  
the trash.

#### ABI YOYOS: *Mill Valley*: CD

Abi Yoyos sound like the Fleshes mixed with This Bike Is A Pipebomb if TBIAP was from the East Bay: dirty, often weird in the right places, DIY punk. They're still oscillating between focus and forgetting there may be an audience bigger than them as a band. It's one thing to describe the process of knitting a sweater—"Oh, my that's quite tedious, my friend"—quite another to hand a just-knit sweater to a friend: "Wow, you put all that hard work in for me when I was away? How nice." So, for over half of the record: brilliant. The other less-than-half: chain-yanking. Here's what came to mind while listening to *Mill Valley*: who here bets that Miles Davis could really control his farts and play a solo? My hand's up. —Todd (Big Raccoon)

#### ACKERMANS, THE:

##### *Nobody Knows Us Better Than*: LP

Swedish power pop! That's like saying East Bay pop punk! Or Czechoslovakian polka punk! This is pretty decent stuff, in the Hives vein. Nothing to wet your pants about, but if you love all this stuff, you'll definitely need to get this. Me, I suffer from Yum Yums Dented Head Syndrome (YYDHS). Every time I hear Swedish power pop I expect it to be as good as the mighty Yum Yums, and when it's not I bash my head against the wall. If this were a cereal, it'd be Alpha Bits. —Maddy (Alien Snatch)

#### ACTS OF SEDITION: Self-titled: 7"EP

Honestly, this is pretty much a wet dream in a plastic sleeve. I first saw Acts Of Sediton in a basement in Milwaukee (which was strange as both the band and I are from California). They played with Period 3, Typhoid Mary, Get Rad, and Chinese Telephones. Three bands of hardcore/trash followed by two pop punk. Such a strange mixture, and it was one of the most amazing shows I've been to. Acts Of Sediton blew me away, and almost (literally) knocked me over (Al Blotto focuses and just starts swinging his bass as he plays, low and fast). As for this record, this is a perfect encapsulation of that show. Fast, furious, brutal. It sounds like they're in control of a madness raging around them, created by them, encouraged by them, but still separated from them. Lyrically, spot-fucking-on. And, just to win me over a little more, they follow each song with a brief, pertinent quote (which to me says volumes more than other bands who write introductory paragraphs to each song). Oh, but I'm not done gushing yet. The vinyl is half

translucent green and opaque yellow. Seriously, I'm stunned. Limited to 500. —Megan (Spacement)

#### ADVERSARY WORKERS, THE:

##### *Glennondonia*: 7"

Fugazi-influenced political punk from St. Louis! IWW logos and disjointed guitars! This sounds like something all my friends liked in college, but I never got into. Maybe it's because I didn't discover Rites of Spring until two years ago. In other words, maybe it's because I'm an idiot. If this were a cereal, it'd be Honey Nut Oh's. Everyone else I know seems to like 'em but me! —Maddy (NoWire)

#### AKIAKANE:

##### *Samurai Punk Rock Girls*: CD

Attention: Dichotomy alert! Super silly, fun, fast music played by a group of Japanese girls with super serious lyrics about the bombing of Hiroshima and World War II. My body wants to dance, but my brain wants to think! Oh, the horror! This is Kix (serious!) with a bunch of Froot Loops thrown on top! —Maddy (Asian Man/Einstein)

#### ALBATROSS, AN: *Blessphemy (Of the Peace-Beast Feastgiver and the Bear Warp Kumite)*: CD

Between the unrelenting and relentless shrieking of the mouth man and the restless nomadic hand-toes of the piano man, your ears are in for something akin to the most irritating carnival ever—one featuring stuff like: the Biting Zoo, the Eczema Wheel, Eardrum Tattoos, the Portable Toilet where when a guy hits the round circle outside with a baseball you get dumped in the Turd Soup, everyone there is four years old, and vegan corn dogs. That, or some fucked up version of the "Flash Gordon" soundtrack.



Songs exclusively about wetland  
preservation, singing frogs, and  
"female fish growing dicks" (seriously!)

—Maddy Tight Pants

Reatard's fingerprints all over it (along with Alex of the Lids). Two originals and a Wire cover on the b-side. —Megan (Plastic Idol)

#### ANTIDOTE: *Another Dose*: CD

Not to be confused with the old NY hardcore band, this Antidote, who hail from Holland, specializes in straightforward, no bullshit European hardcore with lyrics focused on punk politics, squatting, and homophobia, among other things. Their unpretentious, balls-out delivery is a breath of fresh air that lifts 'em above the pack of parrot punks and rehash rebels. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

#### ANXIETIES, THE: *The De-evolution Will Be Televised*: 7"EP

Again, I can't state enough how firmly I back anything on Plastic Idol. Buy it all! Buy it all now!! Here we've got three tracks from a band I've never heard of, yet it's exactly what I want. If Smogtown sounded slightly more at home at a living room dance party than at the beach, you'd be pretty close to what's here. Great stuff. —Megan (Plastic Idol)

#### APE SHITS, THE / THE GASH: *Split 7"*

The Apeshits: Sonofabitch. Just when I think I've had my fill of straight-ahead, dirty rock'n'roll, I'm reminded that I'm just tired of bands doing it wrong. Texas is the answer, once again. The Ape Shits berserk-out like simians getting their fur singed by lightning and are fueled by Sandman-like wrestling chops, Beerland swagger, and AC/DC Motardation. I like. The Gash: Makes me sad when you pick up a piece of vinyl and it's a good band's epitaph. The Gash—which included Joe of the Marked Men—took an approach akin to the Young Lion's Conspiracy: existential anguish, revolutionary rhetoric, steak knives, and the bloody dissection of morphophonemics to rediscover rock'n'roll in its primal sense. In other words, they cut the crap, plucked out the heart, kept it simple, and rocked it like the best of lo-fi Denton on shitty equipment. High Tension Wires and Chop Sakis fans take note. —Todd (Big Action)

#### ATARASSIA GROP:

##### *Nonsipuofermareilvento*: CD

This bad boy took some work; I almost pulled a hammy trying to pronounce the album title. A lot of the tunes seem to be about politics, only a couple songs are about drinking. There is a song about rugby too. Think Dropkick Murphys and The Boils if the singer was from Rome. I liked "Every Step," "Scarves Outstretched," and "Letter to Genoa" the best. But I'm a little confused about the sub-liner notes on "I Hate You." Maybe this is just a piss poor translation? But "what else could we say to those madmen who regret Fascism?" Are these guys Fascists? That's totally crazy! —Sean Koepenick (Mad Butcher)

They call it the "Revolutionary Politics of Dance" (and a bunch of even more pretentious shit on the PR sheet), but I'm calling it "Spastic Art Rock". I will say that there's more actual rock on this one than on the other one I heard, but unfortunately it comes in tiny chunks only every few minutes or so, so no real momentum ever develops. —Cuss Baxter (Ace Fu)

#### ALMIGHTY DO ME A FAVOR:

##### Self-titled: CD

When you strip down something that's already naked, you get to bones, blood, and muscle. Bradley Williams's one man band does just that. Absent are the gizmos of the future, the idle distractions of the present. Present is Alabama dirt, clothing with holes, hearts that seek mending, a world that never makes complete sense, and brains that never feel quite right. It's the stuff of Leadbelly and Bob Log III—where simplicity shouldn't be mistaken for ease and a bare soul of easy-to-understand poetics is the driving force. Great stuff. —Todd (Kapow)

#### ANGRY ANGLES:

##### *Apparent Transparent*: 7"

I think Mario at Plastic Idol and I are on a very similar page when it comes to music. I have yet to hear any of his releases and not been taken with them. Angry Angles are no exception. My only mistake was not ordering it soon enough, and the first pressing sold out in two days. Luckily for me, Mario reissued it (this time on yellow vinyl and with different colors on the cover). For some reason, I always remember this having keyboards (which it doesn't) because it would fit well with their raw, two-person take on (oh I hate this term) art punk. A sound that's got Jay





out september...



Jay Reatard  
Blood Visions  
LP/CD



King Khan & BBQ Show  
What's For Dinner?  
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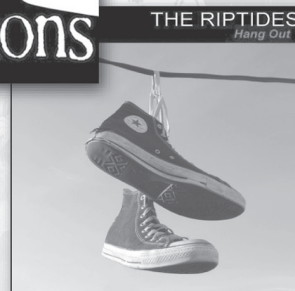
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## AWESOME SNAKES, THE:

### **Cheap-Ass Cassette Demo: CD-R**

Danny and Annie from The Soviettes sing about snakes, the awesomeness of snakes, and other things which are awesome. If it wasn't for the lyrics about snakes, the songs sound a lot like the songs that Danny sings in the Soviettes. The fact that every song is about how snakes are awesome is pretty...um... awesome. As I'm sitting here in a coffee shop writing this up with headphones on, I am laughing out loud and making everyone around me uncomfortable. This is some really funny stuff! I am unsure if the actual release is called "Cheap-Ass Cassette Demo", as is written on the CD-R, or if it is called "Venom", as is listed on the Crustacean site. This must be a super secret promo CD-R, because it didn't even come with a track listing. Luckily, through my internet savvy I have gleaned some titles for you: "If You Don't Like Snakes, I Don't Like You" and "It Would Be Awesome if I Were A Snake" are the two findings I was most impressed by, and that most accurately sums up what you will be hearing when you purchase this, which I assume you will be doing. It's awesome. -Newtim (Crustacean)

### **BAD DUDES: Self-titled: 7"**

Yeah! Yeah! The Bad Dudes are pretty much the Miracle Chosuke, sans a couple members (think of it maybe as Rocket From The Tombs morphing into Pere Ubu). This record continues Chosuke's frantic, keyboard-loaded sounded. It's top-notch, kids. An

added treat for all you fat fucks out there is their version of the Kinks' "King Kong," arranged in a way Ray Davies never dreamed (the Davies brother who was shot, not the one who suffered a stroke). -Ryan Leach (Project Infinity)

### **BAIL OUT!:**

#### **Another One Bites the Dust: CD**

Should I pretend to know a lot about hardcore to write this review? No! I shall not! Bail Out is from D.C., and their website says they're breaking up so one of the members can enroll in the Peace Corps. But Maddy, you protest, I could Google that shit if I cared. You're the reviewer! Review goddamnit! So, Bail Out play, um, fast! Their best line? "Water Balloon Attack! You're fucking dead!" Punk rock! If this were a cereal, it'd be something I almost never eat, like S'mores cereal. I couldn't even tell you what it tastes like, that's how dumb I am! -Maddy (Rosewater)

### **BAYONETTES, THE:**

#### **Stuck in This Rut b/w Sour: 7"**

Sharp shooting punk pop with crystalline female vocals cutting the way. If you like X-Ray Spex (sans horns and a little less of Polly's trill and howl/yodel) and have it updated, via the likes of The Soviettes (the male backup vocals add a nice dimension), you're in the right place. This Canadian foursome jounces on the lean musical bedrock of something akin to early Police, where the playing's inventive, but not flashy; rockin' without the crotch-grabbin'. If my math's

right, Mark Pesci, who plays in the Bayonettes, was the dude who did a stage dive right onto the floor during a Marked Men show in Austin, was ambulated out, but managed to play a set the next day. That's a testament to the power of good music healing, once again, and so is this short slab of vinyl. -Todd (Deranged)

### **BELLAKUN, THE:**

#### **Bendicion Maldita: CD**

I have a confession; my car was broken into months ago. Due to the mess my car is in, I didn't realize the thieves left this CD behind. I apologize to the band. Since I found this disc it has been on repeat. Although extremely mellow, which isn't usually my main source of pleasure, I instantly enjoyed the sounds coming out of my stereo. Comparisons to Sea And Cake and Mogwai can't be quickly dismissed. The drums are all real tracks and not electronic, unlike Sea And Cake. The vocals lend themselves more to that comparison. Lyrically the Bellakun take on politics and social dilemmas. Here's an example: "Too bad for current Babylon, you had nothing to do with, but are the scapegoat, excuse to pursue, right wing agenda, let's make some money, for boom boom makers, take advantage of a disaster, to pursue our corporate cancer, mass murder, on no money Muslims, blown up inside the desert, bring this lone star boy and white collar thugs to a court of justice, troops poisoned by uranium made weapons, that's not unheard of, you're disguised like a

sheep, but really a wolf. You red, white, and blue, who's gonna stop you, oh hearer of prayer, please hear what I say, let your kingdom come, to end these men's reigns." The intensity of the lyrics is offset by the mellowness of the swaying music. Punk is an attitude, not a sound. Definitely look for these guys. -Buttertooth (Has Anyone Ever Told You)

### **BELLMER DOLLS: The Big Cats Will Throw Themselves Over: CD**

Art-punk with a serious nod to the Birthday Party and bands of their ilk. Not bad at all. -Jimmy Alvarado (Hungry Eye)

### **BELOW THE SOUND: Three: CD**

Is it their third record? I don't know, but there are three people in it. I think the most important one is the bass player, though the other two contribute drumming and guitaring and have the same last name, Jack. It's Roy. The bass player does that in a dominant and gamboling manner and then also does singing in John Brannon and Steve Albini manners, and what comes out has a number of similarities to Mule and The Jesus Lizard whom I compare almost everyone to but I think it might be true this time. And considering all those Midwest comparisons, you might be surprised to find out they're from Albuquerque, which is not in New Canada but rather in New Mexico. They are, however, on a Midwestern label. Or were, I guess: they're breaking up because you were so mean to them last time they played there. -Cuss Baxter (Crustacean)

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**BLACK SABBATH: The Black Box:  
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For those of you that feel the need to spit venom about how Sabbath was some kind of burnout band, be my guest, dumbasses. "Burnout" — that's funny, as Sabbath stood far across the room from the useless hippie ideals. Love 'em or leave 'em, they're arguably one of the bands you can count on one hand that wrote the definition for the word heavy in the world of rock'n'roll. Heavy can be a fantastic wall of sound, feeling as if it's going to snap your sternum in two. It can sustain a groove far more powerful than any swell in the ocean during a storm. It can grab and shake you by your neck, all the same time scaring your senses into confusion. Fans of Sabbath will attest to experiencing these scenarios the first coupla times they were caught off-guard by this band of extreme proportions. This remastered box includes the first eight LPs that Sabbath released (all with Ozzy on vocals) and a bonus DVD of the boys performing four live cuts at The Beat Club (that were later turned into production vids, complete with projection graphics). The LP covers (*Black Sabbath*, *Paranoid*, *Master Of Reality*, Vol. 4, *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath*, *Sabotage*, *Technical Ecstasy*, and *Never Say Die!*) were exactly replicated into CD size for the box as individual, fold-out cardstock disc trays. Too cool. Also inside is a 75-page hardcover book with scads of written history and pics to tickle the most extreme fan's fancy. I can almost

guarantee that most of you reading this have some dad, mom, aunt, or uncle that has one of these LPs amongst their old record collection, if not in your own (whether or not you want to admit it, bitches). Get your hands on those rekkids, give 'em a test drive on the turntable, and if your ears perk up like a cat, go apeshit and treat yourself to a copy of this box. So call it what you will—burnout music, dinosaur rock, heavy metal—a great song's a great song, period, and Sabbath brought it to the table tenfold. In the recent years, Ozzy and the rest of Black Sabbath has been headlining a touring festival called OzFest (that Ozzy's wife Sharon runs). Ironically, 98 percent of the bands on that tour have had no fucking business to be sharing a stage with Sabbath, with exception to Motorhead & Slayer. All the rest of those "nu-metal" kooks aren't fit to wipe a dead man's ass with. Two ginourmous thumbs up to Rhino for the excellent job and getting this on the shelves for future generation Sabbath fans. It's boxes like this that can inspire kids in garage bands to do covers of *Children of the Grave* or *Tomorrow's Dream*. I mean, how many AFI spin-off acts can one country stomach? —Designated Dale (Rhino: [www.rhino.com](http://www.rhino.com))

**BLATANT: Boy in the Mirror: CD**

Ack! I'm two seconds in and already the lame distorted vocals start! This is as bad as the band name would suggest! Boring rock! Argh! Fie! Feck! Fiddlesticks! And they cover "Don't You (Forget about Me)." If this were a

cereal, it'd be Berry Berry Kix. Barf! —Maddy (Independent Artists Alliance)

**BLÖÖDHAG: Hell Bent for Letters: CD**

Who said metalheads are stupid? These warriors against book burning are the opposite of what you think a metal band should sing about. Songs about authors: sixteen of them. That is no small feat. I know I'm honest enough to say I'm stupid and can't name sixteen authors of classic literature. These dudes do and write songs about them. How original is that?! But not only are they literary, they have the metal chops and can bust out the riffs with the best of them. Live, they are freakin' awesome! But watch out, they don't throw out raw meat at the audience. If you are not lookin', you might get smacked in the head with a paperback. Even worse! A hardcover will put you in a hospital with a concussion. The public education system sucks, so go out and purchase a copy of this so that you can learn while you headbang. —Donofthedeath (Alternative Tentacles)

**BOOGDISH: 7"**

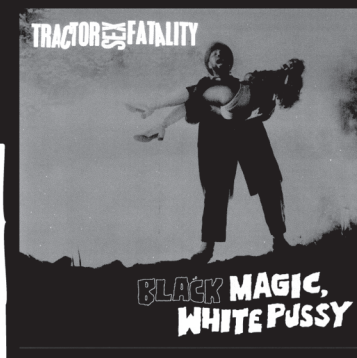
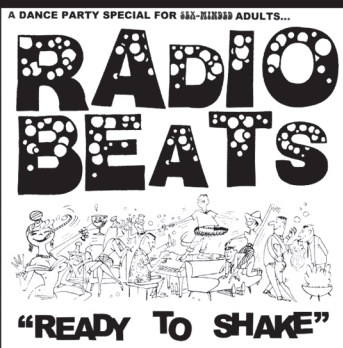
So I reviewed this dude's zine in *Razorcake* a while back, and it was a tour zine regarding his one-man band, Boogdish. I erroneously called said outfit "Moogdish" in the zine review. He later sent this record to ze 'Cake, along with a letter requesting the staff to please get the name right this time. Okay, dude, here we go: the band's name is *Boogdish*. The record is untitled. Said record is a three song, one-sided EP on clear vinyl with a pretty rad red silkscreen on the other side. Definitely

looks neat, and the guy seemed pretty okay in his zine, so I wasn't as initially trepidatious about a record like this (one guy, a bass and a programmed synth) as I normally would be. Unfortunately, this thing essentially came across as outtakes from the Faint's *Danse Macabre* stitched together with songs from a Saturday morning cartoon, the whole thing ultimately ruined by the guy's eye-wateringly bad falsettos in the first song and his homage to '50s slow-dance jams in the third. At least I got the name right this time. —Keith Rosson (Hairy Chested)

**BORN/DEAD / PELIGRO SOCIAL:  
Split 7" EP**

The packaging is gorgeous: gatefold 7", mini info zine about assault, streaked vinyl. Born/Dead: It's unfair to compare, but the dramatic pacing, the shout/strangle vocals, the expanses of doom gallop, are all Tragedy's trademarks. The good news is Born/Dead does it well. The so-so news is that, in my opinion, Tragedy does it a bit better. I guess it depends on how unquenchable your thirst for this type of music is. Peligro Social: Excellent borstal/barrio melody-infected hardcore punk. Sung entirely in Spanish and sounding like a mix of '70s English pub rockers with the searing guitar work of early Bad Religion, I could swear this was coming out of East Los Angeles (I think a member of Moral Decay's in this) and be the natural progression of a band that imploded far too early on, like the Black Jax. —Todd (Tankcrimes)

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#### CAREER SUICIDE:

**Anthology Vol. Two: CD**  
**CAREER SUICIDE: Self-titled: LP**

What can you say? If Career Suicide came out in 1980, they'd be playing sold-out shows to kids across the world, I'd currently be mildly annoyed that kids who'd never gotten a chance to see them were wearing their shirts (but hadn't bought their records), and they would have forever etched themselves into the memory-challenged history of hardcore. But it's not so. Toronto's Career Suicide have got that early, snot-virulent '80s spirit and approach but realize it's the 2000s, so what we're experiencing isn't a photocopy of some shitty Polaroid of what some geeze half-remembers as a golden time, but an ebola-ing of a pure strain of hardcore that, until five or six years back, was getting seriously inoculated (word- and idea-wise) by shitty metal and powerviolence. Thank Career Suicide for putting ants back in the bloodstream of anxious music. Thank Career Suicide for getting it right. The CD's a collection of hard-to-track, scattered vinyl and the LP's a repress from 2002, available once again. Well worth your time. —Todd (Deranged)

#### CF98: Enjoy: CD

I had the joy of meeting this band in Krakow, Poland, just three days before I moved back to Wisconsin. I sat in on one of their practices and then we all went beer drinking in a park downtown. Great bunch of guys, and girl. I was impressed, and a little surprised, to find such a polished sounding punk band in Poland, where hardcore and "newmetal"

are most prevalent. Until meeting CF98, I never knew there was such as thing as "Kalfifornia punk." I guess that means bands like Pennywise, NOFX, and the like. Not totally my cup of tea, but I found myself listening to this CD endlessly. I heard some of their music before meeting them and was impressed with Karolina's perfect English vocals. Once I met her, I noticed her thick Polish accent that somehow does not come through in this recording. Bizarre. Great songs about Polish cockrings (called a 'buffalo's eye', I learned), girlfriends getting older, and short-lived friends. I'm just thankful their drummer's father works in Krakow's city hall, which somehow kept the city cops from taking me in for drinking beer in the park. Dla Karolina, Blinek, Stabi, & Alek, dziękuję bardzo. Harnas butelki sa najpisznyi! —Rhythm Chicken (Pasazer: www.cf98.pl)

#### CHEATING HEARTS, THE: Self-titled: CD

I mean, yeah, I'm supposed to like this, right? Sure, considering I'm a fan of Bo Diddley, Greg Cartwright, the Velvets, unprotected sex, Louis-Ferdinand Celine, the Gun Club, etc.—it would make sense that I'd accept this. Um, I don't. I'm just kind of tired of everyone aping The Oblivians. Man, The Oblivians are just okay. The Compulsive Gamblers, The Gories, and The Reigning Sound are where it's at. Those motherfuckers have soul and don't hide behind vocal effects and half-step Eddie Cochran power chord slides. Fuck, man, it's just redundant and there's nothing I hate more than

superfluously redundant redundancies. —Ryan Leach (Self-released)

#### CHROME PISTOLA:

**Information War: CD**

First time I listened to this, I got all tizzied up because the press sheet says all this bullshit about mixing "the beats and bass of dancehall and hip hop with the loud guitars, energy and sense of outrage and boredom with popular music that early punk rock had" but it sounds like the closest this guy ever got to punk rock was one of The Clash's reggae outings. I can't comment on the outrage part, but at any rate the guy makes himself out to be a guy who's reinventing hip hop and I can't hear anything that hasn't been done before, and better (and by better I mean worse). However, on my second (and final) listen, not having looked at the hype sheet for a month, I find it to be passable, mellow hip hop. Certainly nothing groundbreaking, but the guy's voice is smooth enough and the guitars are innocuous in their facelessness. —Cuss Baxter (Mindless)

#### CIRIL: Pink Cave/Metal Postcard: 7"

I still believe most people will not understand how great Ciril is until another generation discovers and champions them long after they have disbanded. Not really fitting tightly into a prefixed definition of punk rock. They float aimlessly around the fringes. With the mainframe of punk as a backbone, they infuse a broody darkness with a sick sense of humor by adding death rock overtones in the music. They are not afraid to add sounds that are not

traditional or comfortable to make the music more interesting from the norm. Darren, the vocalist, adds to the madness by singing in keys not common in punk rock since its early days before hardcore. This new release shows they are still growing as a unit by making new music that is more different than the last. Need a change? —Donofthedead (Vinyl Dog)

#### COCKSPARRER: The Decca Years: CD

Collected here are recordings, fifteen in all, the band made during their short stint at Decca Records circa '77/'78, whereupon they were summarily dropped when their initial singles failed to make a big splash. Listening to this, it becomes painfully obvious what a bunch of ninnies the Decca people were for having neither faith nor patience in the band's ability to really shine. There are some real winners on here, including many that are now considered anthems ("Runnin' Riot"), classics ("Sunday Stripper") and staples of the band's set nearly three decades later ("Teenage Heart"), and many others that are just as good, which would explain why so much of this has found its way onto assorted comps over the years. Although less "punk" and more "pub" than later work, much of what is on here is strong enough to make anyone not stone deaf pay attention and illustrates that much of what makes the band so special was in evidence even early on. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

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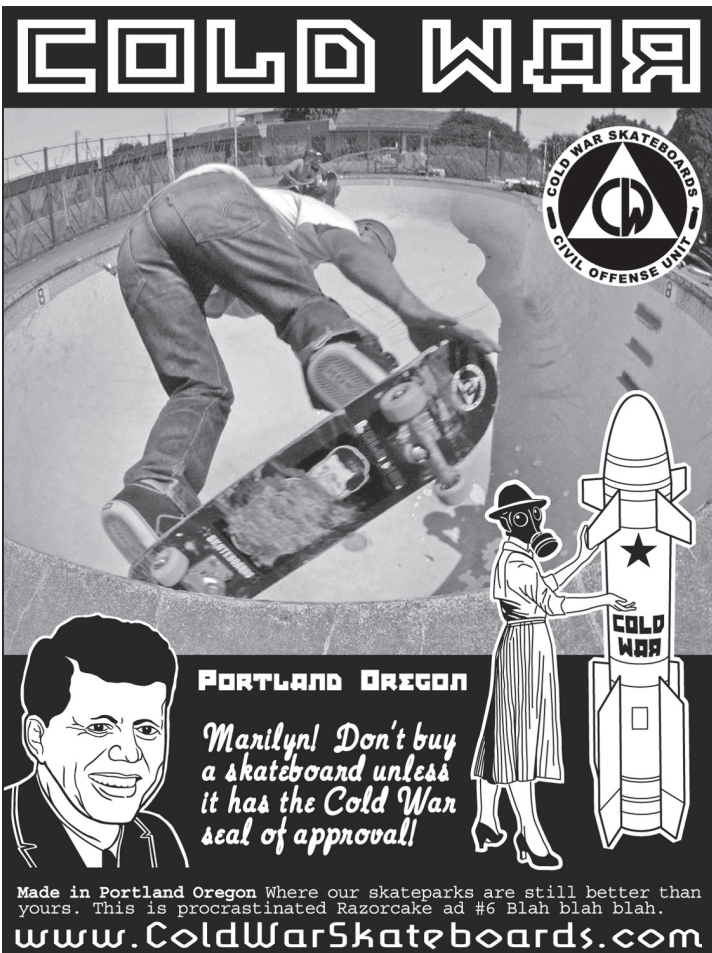
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**CODE OF HONOR: Complete Studio Recordings 1982-1984: CD**

I remember buying the *What Are We Gonna Do?* 7" and thinking how cool it is that they have a guy doing a handplant on the cover. Skate punk! On their split 12" with Sick Pleasure, they had a picture of three skate boards and a guitar. I was in, even though I never bought the split because friends had it. But they played music that spoke to me. Lyrics that were very intelligent and at the time music that was very angry. Listening to it now after twenty-some years, the songs still feel like they have stood the test of time. They didn't break any speed records but they did have a snottiness to their sound like a lot of the bands of that era. Very California sounding. The unreleased track "What's it Gonna Be?" that was recorded at the same time and not included on the 7" is a great song that has been unearthed. Listening to their final album, *Beware the Savage Jaw*, I still feel the same as I did when I first heard it. It shows them growing and experimenting with the music. But a lot of the punk sound seemed to have disappeared while they tried other things. All in all, this like a lot of other discographies, are essential if you are into the history of punk. Also, it's great to get to hear the music again without paying collector prices. —Donofthedeath (Subterranean)

**COME 'N GO, THE: 2: CD**

Ah, man, almost. Musically, The Come N' Go have it. Vocally, they're lost at fucking sea. I mean, the singer can't sing. I'm not talking in a Jeffrey Lee

Pierce or Lou Reed kinda way, but in a bona fide there's-nothing-going-on-in-the-vocal-department way. The band's smart; they cover The Oblivians. The vocals are just as flat as a four-day-old opened can of Coca-Cola. I don't believe it. They need soul, man. The music has soul. Someone needs to light a fire under the singer's ass and get him up to par. Take him to Memphis, fatten his ass up on chicken and lard, and see if you can get some bass and swagger in that voice of his. My advice: phone up Alex Chilton and see if he can pencil the vocalist in. It worked wonders for Steve Wynn. Only don't bring booze: Alex is on the wagon. —Ryan Leach (Voodoo Rhythm)

**CONGA FURY: Dear Friends: CD**

Whoa! Need to put on the brakes here. Raging thrash with female vocals that are blown out and manically screamed. These Japanese thrashers have made a name for themselves internationally in the last few years. Their latest is another notch in their belt. The power of their music feels so punishing to the ears. Sheer speed that feels like you are racing down the road out of control with no brakes or ability to steer. I missed them when they toured the west coast a while ago. That was my loss. What they can create on a recording must be amazing live. I would probably lose bladder control with the likelihood of the getting hurt by the audience enjoying the mayhem. Twenty-five songs are included and should satisfy the taste buds of most fans of Japanese punk. —Donofthedeath (Six Weeks)

**CROW: Bloody Tear: LP**

I am not one of the fortunate to have any of Crow's recorded works that were produced in Japan. But I do have some that I picked when I was fortunate to see them live on their west coast tour. They made me a new asshole after seeing them live. They were so good, I couldn't close my mouth long enough to stop drooling. So having this record in hand is a real treat. There was no way in hell that this was going to suck. Something about Japanese bands that make them appealing to me is the professionalism. They seem to be well rehearsed to the point of playing to near perfection even though they can consume a lot of alcohol. I saw Crow, Paintbox, and Forward now over the last few years and they partied hard and played harder. I believe the proper term to describe this certain style of punk out of Japan is Burning Spirits. Mid tempo to fast with elements of rock and metal with the sheer force of punk. Yelled vocals over metallic riffs, power chords and with no fear of throwing in a guitar solo. An equal blend of punk and metal without being too much of either. Not a song on the whole thing I can say I do not like. Only distraction is having to get up when a side ends to flip the record over to hear more music. A band that has now been around for sometime and hopefully will grace us on these shores again. —Donofthedeath (Prank)

**CURIUM: Nowever: CD**

If I understand this correctly, what it is is a bunch of different peplemouths (some in various states of robotic

manipulation) reading e. e. cummings's poems, set to mild and minimal electro-musical accompaniment by whatever or whoever Curium is. Sounds a lot like that Laurie Anderson chestnut "O Superman" except instead of being weird and political it's just weird and poetical. Nice background music to absorb your inattention, with just enough texture to catch your ear occasionally but not intrude on your serious pursuits like shoe-burying, ant-smelling or standing around. What are you, a dog? —Cuss Baxter (Dynamophone)

**DEAD HOOKERS' BRIDGE CLUB:**

***The Hoo Dee Hoo: 7"***

It was sweet of Jack Switchblade to include a handwritten note addressed to *Razorcake*, simply stating, "We are the Dead Hookers' Bridge Club and we play rock and roll music. This record is good to listen to." I agree. It's a weird mix of campy, swampy, fifties falsetto; fuzzed out average rock; and coked-out, pubbed-up, bash-your-head with a heavy glass mug punk. Not a bad hand. —Jessica T (New Art School)

**DEAD TO ME: Cuban Ballerina: CD**

Dead To Me is my new favorite band. Co-fronted by ex-One Man Army singer, Jack, I was hopeful but my usual pessimistic self when I heard about Dead To Me. Suspicious but happy that Jack was making music again, because I loved OMA and was bummed when they broke up. However, all suspicions were laid to rest after my first listen. I was smitten. I fell in love with the record immediately. And that hasn't

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happened to me in awhile. I put it in my stereo where it remained for a solid month (literally). Just on basic visceral response I was hooked. Co-frontmen Chicken (also of Western Addiction) and Jack do an amazing job sharing vocals. Chicken has a more gritty sound which meshes sinfully with Jack's harmonic high notes. They compliment each other in a way I never imagined. The more I listened to the record the more I fell in love with it. The lyrics are impeccable, unique, genuine, and honest. The first song, "Don't Lie" instantly grabs you and despite the upbeat feel the lyrics are about real and raw things like war and American imperialism. A lot of the lyrics were also written by Chicken while he was going through rehab. "By the Throat," "Still Heartbeat," "Visiting Day" and "Special Professional" are amazing tracks. Even non-OMA fans will like this—*really* it's not a copycat version of OMA, it's unique and truly infectious. I'm a fan. —Jenny Moncayo (Fat)

#### DEAD TO ME: *Cuban Ballerina*: CD

Featuring Jack of One Man Army—and his way of threading neo street punk anthems into the flagwork of classics that Sham 69 could have written—there's no doubt the songs are catchy as hell. (It also doesn't hurt to have retired rollerblade champion Chicken on bass.) But there's this almost subliminal quality to the record that makes it slide by too easily for me. I know nothing of modern recording practices, but the tones of the instruments—not the pacing, or the singing—make

the record seem covered in Teflon. Zwoop. Right through. Claws seem trimmed. Thorns seem pruned. The setting's alluring, but it's a painting of a rose bush instead of running naked and stumbling through a rose garden. The noticeable exceptions are the songs, like "Special Professional," with dramatic pacing shifts that chip at that sonic barricade. So, more *Streets of San Francisco* Swingin' Utters, smell of exhaust, and the spitting out of asphalt after a faceplant, and I do believe Dead To Me will find me a full-on fan. —Todd (Fat)

#### DEADFALL:

##### *Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay*: 7"

I saw these guys twice last week with Municipal Waste! Both bands were so good. The contrast of styles made them a good touring pair. Deadfall, if you are not of the know, play straight up fast punk rock. I wanted to use the term hardcore, but that term has been tainted of late with a genre and fan base I would much rather not be associated with at this time. In your face and not afraid to confront, these guys play with heart and enjoyment. More times than not, it shows when a band is not into it. The four times I have seen this band, they gave it their all. It also comes across in their recorded works. A band that is not afraid to thrash and have a good time. Taking influence from many of the greats from the '80s and not sounding like a retro rip-off. They are one of the Bay Area's highlights at the moment and close enough that they come down more than once a year. —Donofthedeath (Tank Crimes)

#### DEFCON 4: *File Under Fuck*: CD

From a city that's famous for not being L.A., Defcon 4 does their best EyeHateGod impression, what with the screaming and the fast-slow and the between-song TV samples. Sadly, they rarely hit the mark, probably in part due to the fact that they're from a part of the country that produces more streetpunk in one minute than New Orleans has produced since 1964. Not that Defcon 4 is streetpunk, but I get the feeling their northern roots keep them from being able to sink into the southern miasma that powers EHG. Nice finger paintings, though. —Cuss Baxter (Black Box)

#### DEGENERICS, THE:

##### *The Final Chapter*: 7" EP

The funny thing about this is that I'd picked this up, kind of forgotten about it, and my friend Joe sent me some of their earlier stuff, which then reminded me that I had yet to listen to this. I'm guessing by the title that this might be their last release, but I'm hoping I'm wrong (or that they may be following the lead of *Friday the 13th IV: The Final Chapter*). Hardcore that makes the term seem not as tainted as it has been lately. They are definitely aware of their history: taking some of the best elements of lower Northeast hardcore from the '80s, while maintaining a contemporary sound. Definitely hope to hear more from them. —Megan (Don Giovanni)

#### DEMENTED ARE GO:

##### *Hellbilly Storm*: CD

Hooray. Yippie. Huzzah. Yawn. This album from the debatable progenitors

of psychobilly is one of the better psychobilly comeback endeavors; their musicianship has been honed and perfected but their voices sound just a tad tired. Demented Are Go is still doing the mutant zombie demon gore thing, but there are a few exciting treats that are just so good I'm almost in favor of this album. Although the lyrics are still about getting drunk, gore, skating and the bourgeois, some of the music is just so damn catchy. Now if there were just a little more. —Jessica T (Hepcat)

#### DESTRUCTORS666: *06/06/06*: CD-Single

Two mid-tempo punk tracks from the latest incarnation of a band around since 1977. Not as thrashy as stuff from the recently reissued *Exercise the Demons of Youth*, but they burn at a nice rate nonetheless. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rowdy Farrago)

#### DISASTER STRIKES: *Liberty Toast*: CD

Boston's got a lot of hardcore history, and Disaster Strikes aims to claim a piece of it. With ardently political lyrics and blistering guitars (and a special guest appearance by Jello Biafra), they declare their general dissatisfaction with most of the world we live in, but especially the current political regime in Washington. As much as I agree with the band's politics, this isn't what I'm looking for in a rock band. I don't need to be preached to, and if I wanted to hear political commentary I'd switch to NPR. On the other hand, if you're into hardcore influenced social commentary, then Disaster Strikes have got a something they want to say to you. —Brian Mosher (Alternative Tentacles)





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**DISCHARGE:****Beginning of the End: CDEP**

I admit it, I saw this incarnation of Discharge a couple of years ago. It was entertaining but it wasn't the Discharge I saw in 1982. Just like seeing the Misfits with Danzig singing and seeing them again with just Jerry Only. But that was not entertaining. Three out of the four original members continue on without original singer Cal. Replacement singer Rat from the Varukers makes this sound like... the Varukers. Enjoyable on its own, but is hard to put it with the legacy that is Discharge. —Donofthedeath (Thunk)

**DISCREET DOLL BAND, THE:****Back in Business: 7"**

I really don't like glam that much. It can be done well, but overall, the genre doesn't set well with me. Given that, the things that I look for if it's something I have to listen to is the quality of the recording. It is fun live, but if you are going to bring it home with you, the recording has to sound full, loud, and well produced. It's not punk. You can't get away with a shitty recording, because it isn't meant to sound that way. It's a pretentious form of music, and the recording has to show that. Musically, the songs have to hold their own. They have to be able to keep my attention. Unfortunately, this 7" doesn't have anything I am looking for. It sounds like shit, the songs are boring, and even the artwork is lame. This 7" is just pointless. —Newtmin (Rich Bitch)

**DIVIDER: At Twilight: CD**

You've got six songs here full of blastbeats, throat-rending vocals, and some heavy and intricate hardcore-meets-metal riffage. Their lyrics are whipcrack smart, the production's excellent, and there's enough variety in their eye-gouging and throat-punching that the six songs go by pretty fast. I'm thinking Curl Up And Die, I'm thinking Killing The Dream and maybe some Madeline Ferguson too. Would probably please both straight-up metalheads and fans of the five mile an hour punch in the face that Drowningman dishes out. One of those deals where it definitely wasn't cringeworthy by any means, but also wasn't a sonic version of an ice-cold Pabst on a hot summer day. Still, if I saw 'em in a basement somewhere, I'd probably go right up front and stay there for the whole set. —Keith Rosson (Shock Value)

**DRUNKEN BOAT: Made in Oregon: CD**

I have yet to see these kids, so I'm trying to be content with the releases, and this one definitely helps. To my knowledge, this is their first full-length. I hear elements of Bent Outta Shape and Snuggle, but they mostly remind me of the first time I saw Rcade Inferno when they had just started touring as a two-piece in San Diego. Completely stripped down to just two guitars (though Drunken Boat has a full lineup), it was two guys in the middle of the living room, half standing, half dancing, and singing like it was like their last chance to ever sing again. It's that passion that really sells me on bands like Drunken Boat. They make me want

to care—not necessarily about any sort of cause or anything—hell, it could just be caring about having the best fucking time right then and there, but I'm truly caring about it at that moment. And for getting this crotchety, apathetic lady to care, they've got to be good. —Megan (1-2-3-4 Go)

**ENSAM: Self-titled: 7"**

Licensed from Fight Records out of Finland, a U.S. label releases a band from Finland that might turn a few heads. Take two members of Riistetyt, one from Kaaos, and a former Brazilian that used to be in Neurose Urbana & Desastre to create a band that is influenced by Swedish Hardcore. That made me look twice. Female-led and with a power unit of experience, this band undoubtedly made me pay attention. A sampling of four songs that I hope is a precursor of what is to come of this unit. The hardcore songs are fierce and memorable. I was intrigued the most by the slower number entitled "O Eterno." The song has a brooding quality and from the translated lyrics of living in a long winter of depression that seems fitting. Now that I have been sold, I want more. —Donofthedeath (Bro-core)

**ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CRUNCH:****Wet Stuff Dries and Other Tidbits: CD**

If you ever wanted a less folky This Bike Is a Pipe Bomb writing songs exclusively about wetland preservation, singing frogs, and "female fish growing dicks" (seriously!), this is the band for you. If you're into taking Cleveland Bound Death Sentence's genius song

"Rumbleseats and Running Boards" and turning it into a slow song about environmental destruction, this is the band for you. If you're Maddy Tight Pants, you really want to like some of this stuff, but you end up listening to the Marked Men instead. If this were a cereal, it'd be something "natural," and instead of some super cool laser sugar ring in the bottom of the box, there'd be a CD of spoken word environmental speeches. —Maddy (Grateful)

**ERGS!, THE: Jazz Is Like the New Coke b/w Out There: 7"**

The Ergs! are the new Descendents, which is weird to say because the Descendents are still around and still really good. But, with the Descendents' pacing of four to five years between releases, one needs faster drips from the percolator. The Ergs! continue in rapid succession: that naive-yet-razored wantonness of love, the bubbling instrumentation that masks darker sentiments, the almost-instant sing-a-long-ability, and undeniable underdog charm with Hüsker Dü-like teeth. They aren't crying into flowers on pop punk's grave. They're etching their own new monuments in vinyl, a song at a time. —Todd (Art of the Underground)

**FIND THEM TO FIGHT THEM:****Self-titled: CD**

I got a tip for you: if you don't really have any songs, and you can't really sing, just play really, really fast and try to sound like Cookie Monster. If you're not sure what I mean, check out this CD. —Brian Mosher (Up Yours, Luv!!)

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#### FIRST PUNIC WAR, THE: *Unicorn: 7"*

One time I was at a party and some guy's ex-girlfriend came up and grabbed him by the nuts real hard, screamed some shrilly incoherent nonsense before shoving him away and storming off. He sort of twitched against the wall on the floor in the fetal position, but he felt much better a few hours and beers later. First Punic War sort of makes me think of that. A pretty, naked unicorn girl on the front and the tiny white vinyl 7" that crams all this nightmare cycle of irate noises, often unrecognizable racket, in this strangled noise guitar...it catches you off guard and leaves you empathetically hurting, but it's kind of entertaining too. —Comrade Bree (First Punic War)

#### FISH KARMA:

##### *The Theory of Intelligent Design: CD*

Bob Dylan and Doc Dart from the Crucifucks have a bastard love child with a wicked sense of humor and a need to piss off god and the powers that be. Add a metal backing band and you've pretty much got this record. Seeing how incredibly obtuse they are, "Fifty Caliber Christ" is no doubt destined to become the national anthem for the religious right. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

#### FLATLINERS: *Let It Go: 7"*

Despite the rad Mike Bukowski cover, and for whatever inappropriate reason, I'd already written these guys off as some ham-handed hardcore straight edge act before I'd even

heard them. They would, I imagined, simultaneously sing about unity and being stabbed in the back, double-crossed, etc. The usual straight edge fare, right? This is the obvious danger of presumption, because I was one ill-prepared mofo when I actually played this record and lightning started flying around the room. Thing is, I didn't even care when the roof flew off, the cat went flying out the window and every piece of glass in the place shattered. What I mean is, this shit is so goddamn good it's ridiculous, and within the first fifteen seconds of "See It Through," my preconceived notions and every bone in my body had simultaneously evaporated. Musically, they're taking the melodic-but-venomous approach that bands like Death Is Not Glamorous and Fingerprint have utilized so well, coupled that with stop-on-a-pinhead precision, anthemic vocals, furious and weaving guitar interplay, all of it. It's just a mean production all around. These cats are just so spot-on, and there's a relentless catchiness to the whole endeavor, my only complaints are that these are the band's last recorded songs and that it was over way, way too quickly. This one's a keeper. —Keith Rosson (Slab-O-Wax)

#### FLESHIES: *Scrape the Walls: CD*

Fleshies have gotten into my "happy rock place." After seeing them, their records sound better because I can project the songs into my mind and see them play. Their previous, *The Sicilian*, I didn't give much salt to besides, "Yeah, it's good," a couple years back,

but it never seemed to leave the truck. It's not often that a weird band provides great real-life-soundtrack music and continues to get better with each listen. *Scrape the Walls* is great. It's the Fleshies. They're growing: AC/DC rides lightning bolts to the Cows and they make pop music that could be on a parallel universe's *Mork and Mindy*. Even though I was given the CD, I happily bought the vinyl. That's how much I believe in it. So, leave with this: great record. My gripe: I understand you own the label Jello, but another guest appearance? I'm no stoner, but if I was, I'd be annoyed at the helium frog taking vocal duties—not as an intro, not as an outro—but smack dab in the middle of the album for a full song. It's jarring. And, as a rabid music collector as Jello is, he should know great albums are based on this: continuity. You're groovin'. Your bong's hot. You're chillin' to Johnny going ape shit then slithering into your sweater, then wham-o. The Sugar Smacks spokesfrog does a Sparks cover. Waaa? I have a feeling that many of the dudes involved with this record are smart, so I propose this retroactive solution: on LP, make it one of those hidden tracks where you have to lift the needle to get to it. That's fun. You chose the annoyance. Or, for CD, find a way to have that track play every 66<sup>th</sup> time it's played. That'd absolutely creep people out and they'd have to wait 66 more times until it played again, long after they've tried—and failed—to convince their friends that it's really on there. —Todd (Alternative Tentacles)

#### FLEXX BRONCO: *Volume 1: CDEP*

Flat out roadhouse rock'n'roll abounds on this six-track, self-released CD. Very vaguely David Lee Roth's Van Halen meets Tenderloin? There just might be something there. —Jessica T (self released)

#### FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC: *Human: CDEP*

Droning, non-melodic noise with a singer who couldn't carry a tune if it was double strapped to his back with a Transformers backpack. This Baltimore band churns up five songs that really don't do anything for me. "I Give In" and "I Give Up" are two of the more imaginative song titles on this release. "I Got Out" should be the next one since I had to get out of ear range. Ugh. —Sean Koepenick (Reptilian)

#### FORCED MARCH:

##### *Take Immediate Action: CD*

So my buddy Jeff and I have had this running joke for years now. I was listening to some Bad Religion album or another and, you know, digging it, right? I'll confess, sure. But Jeff *hated* 'em, still does. His argument's strictly remained the same over the years: "All their songs sound exactly the same." And so has my response: "Yeah, but it's a *good song*, dude." That said, I've heard people refer to these guys as similar to Infest or bands of that ilk—and I guess I could go with that; there's a decent amount of slow/fast thrash parts, and the guy bellows his way relentlessly through these thirteen songs. But as someone who admittedly digs Bad Religion much more than he'll

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probably ever dig Infest, I'll have to pull a Jeff on this one. It all just sounds the same to me. In one ear and out the other, you know? The fury's there, all the checklisted topics are tackled, the solos are in the right place. But there's the sinking feeling that I've heard it before and wasn't that floored the first time around. So take it for what it is—if you're looking for some dark, brooding hardcore with a minor dash of metallic noodling tossed in there, you'll be loving this. I mean, I don't want to bag on these guys too hard, it's just that I'd rather pull out *No Control* or *Suffer*—that's the kind of repetition that works for me. —Keith Rosson (Forced March)

#### FROM FIRST TO LAST: *Heroine*: CD

I tried to keep an open mind with this one. I mean Mr. Brett put it out. It's got slick packaging—all black CD no less. But as I delved deeper and deeper into the dark recesses of this abyss, I realized that all hope is lost. If you like Evanescence or Korn for breakfast, then you may like this one. But if nu-metal angst is not up your alley, then this may be one to steer clear of. Oh, and Wes Borland played bass on this record. I knew I smelled Limp Bizkit taint on this one. "And We All Have a Hell" is song number four on this CD. Mine was having to listen to this more than once. Careful with that pitchfork! —Sean Koepenick (Epitaph)

#### FUCKED UP: *Hidden World*: CD

Truly great bands will make you eat your words and you'll smile with every bite. They'll challenge your fundamental musical beliefs. Fucked

Up is one of those bands. Last week, if you would have told me that I'd be defending a band with a nine and half minute song, I'd of said, "Fuck you and all the Asia records ever made." But, somehow, Fucked Up has been able to take that hallowed two-minutes-and-out energy, and blow it apart. It's like whomever first discovered America: it got expanded and exploited way beyond anyone's wildest expectations. Grand Canyon in scope, *Hidden World* spans seventy-something minutes, sweeping and filling every section with an awe that gets infinitely larger. I got this same feeling—nowhere near the sound—from Turbonegro's *Apocalypse Dudes* and Dillinger Four's *Midwestern Songs of the Americas*. All these musical notes lying on the ground, seemingly scattered and broken up by subgenre, pigeonholed by the lazy hacking of sounds, trampled by careless or not-as-talented-as-they-thought musicians? These notes, they all belong together. They all fit. Somehow. And for—for all intents and purposes to the world at large—Fucked Up is "just" a hardcore band. Good lord, what ambition. There's about ninety-nine levels to this record and I'm gonna keep listening deeper and deeper. —Todd (Jade Tree)

#### FUCKING MACHINES: *Stole My Quarter: 7" EP*

If Scared Of Chaka looked more towards early '80s hardcore instead of fucking up the Sonics (in great ways), you'd get something akin to the Fucking Machines. Chargey, yelly, spazzy, dual-vocals, "we just lit all those fireworks in

a van on the highway? You're hair's on fire," punk rock. "Dudeicide"'s the gem track. —Todd (Last Drag)

#### GANON: *In the Dead of Sleep*: CDEP

I can't think of the last record I heard that I hated this much. In fact, I can barely imagine a record I'd hate more than this. Here are some things it has: calculated emotional manipulation via "pretty" vs. "brutal" parts, unintelligible hemorrhoid vocals, and titles like "The Calm of Unlight" ("unlight" being, I suspect, what you and I call "dark"). Here are some things it doesn't have: joy, enthusiasm, actual rock music, or engaging riffs. Furthermore, from what I can tell (which is not much since I left the home video game market shortly after the introduction of the groundbreaking Atari 5200) they're named after a character from a Nintendo game, which either proves that they do have a sense of humor or that they don't. I do kind of like the cover art though: picture of a birdie. —Cuss Baxter (Acerbic Noise Development, LLC)

#### GIANT HAYSTACKS / ARMEDALITE RIFLES: *Split: 7" EP*

Giant Haystacks: Think *Three Way Tie (for Last)*-era Minutemen, sprinkled with Nomeansno. The initial knife-point blurts of their early work has been redirected to mid-paced, heart-felt, believable punk funk. That said; it didn't initially grab me as hard as the earlier material, but I have a feeling this'll grow on me. Armedalite Rifles: Reminds me of political and introspective, rough-hewn punk (pop and otherwise) of the '90s (Strawman,

bits of Swiz, traces of Jawbreaker, the two songs of Fifteen that I can listen to until the self-righteousness chokes me). I rarely say this because I'm no sucker for fidelity, but their songs sound too hot, and I think these guys would totally benefit from clearer recording so their intricacies aren't lost. —Todd (FDH)

#### GOOD RIDDANCE: *My Republic*: CD

After their brief hiatus, the band is back to form with the return of Sean Sellers on drums. This is the mid period unit which is my personal favorite and I believe is when they found their identity. They also return to the Blasting Room to record where they get the best sound out of the band. As I grew out of bands from the past, GR are a band I do not tire of. They have enough aggression to have a bite. There is melody that they can be listened to often. They write good songs that are memorable and are easily identifiable as music of their own. On this release, there is a certain comfort level that they didn't have to sell me on their music. They seem to know their own formula and continue on growing without making drastic changes to their sound. So as I listen for the first time, I feel like the songs are familiar. That familiarity will make me continue to listen to this release. There are a few bands that I continue to buy anything they release. GR is a band I will continue to collect because I am a fan. —Donofthedeat (Fat)

#### GOOD RIDDANCE: *My Republic*: CD

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Good Riddance's heroes Bad Religion, have finished defining the scope of their music, all that's left is variation on a theme. The land's bought. The security system's installed. The house is decorated. All that's left is painting the rooms a different color, installing prettier floors. The happy news is that this is a good Good Riddance record: insightful lyrics, expert playing, pitch-perfect production. It's political pop punk that's not a shame to listen to. The bad news is that if you've picked up one of Good Riddance's last several albums, you've, essentially, already got this one. Also, if I forget what I'm listening to when making some toast, I could swear part of this album was Bad Religion's *The Gray Race*. —Todd (Fat)

#### GOSSIP, THE: *Listen Up!*: CDEP

The Human League's *Dare!* is one of my all-time favorite records. People look at me with askance when I tell them that; a non-verbal expression stating, "My pal actually likes that god awful new wave band!" I understand why they do, especially considering my fixation on Lou Reed, Peter Laughner, Gene Clark, Jeffrey Lee Pierce, and other assorted doomed artists. What people are missing is the Human League's charm: the band writes great songs about, um, celebrating life. Personally, *Dare!* is a godsend, a reprieve from all that unhealthy nihilism, bad times, and disaffection. The Gossips' *Listen Up!* is a lot like *Dare!*. It's an artistically rich record that knows how to have fun. I mean, take the band's cover of Aaliyah's "Are U That Somebody." Unlike The

Saints or The Undertones taking the piss out of an oldie, The Gossip are one hundred percent sincere about the song; there's no doubt singer Beth Ditto truly love Aaliyah. Jesus, I can't tell you how refreshing that is; to have the fucking brass to cover such a stupid song. And let's face it: rock'n'roll was built on stupid songs; examples: "Great Balls of Fire," "Tutti Frutti," and "Hound Dog." People today, people like you and me: esoteric music fans with little to no life, forget that. We're so caught up in saying no, in second guessing, we forget to say yes and to occasionally celebrate things banal and juvenile. I miss rock'n'roll's naiveté, which is why bands like The Reigning Sound, The Gories, and The Human League remain so endearing. The Gossip are helping bring that back too. It's not an escapism; just a celebration of the joys of being alive. And really, is that so wrong? —Ryan Leach (Kill Rock Stars)

#### GUNNAR HANSEN: *Village Idiot: 7"*

If you name your band after the genius actor who played Leatherface in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and was in the disturbing movie *Murder-Set-Pieces*, you better live up to the name. These Canadians do that and then some. Fast gruff '80s hardcore. Great lyrics, especially the song "Fuck Your Feelings." Kind of what you would picture playing in the background if Gunnar Hansen really was running after you with a chainsaw. (If Goblin was unavailable for the soundtrack of course.) —Newtim (Audio Fellatio)

#### HARPOON GUNS: *12" EP*

I pulled the grievous boner of failing to review a Harpoon Guns 7" that came sometime last year so perhaps I can make up for it by gushing a little extra over this (though I will say up front that it's got one of the lamest covers I've ever seen—I would not ever buy this record based on the way it looks. I don't think anyone would, not even a dork, a dink, or a pudwack). Outside, and inside, that, however, things are peach-dandy. Despite the fact that these kids weren't even born then, they manage to swim really close to mountains of almost-generic hardcore that was all the rage circa 1984—all that fantastic teenage piss and vinegar that overflowed from Mystic compilations and no doubt lived and died in 2200 towns and cities across this sickening planet. Appropriately, the EP was recorded by Craigums whose own backward-looking band What Happens Next? actually goes maybe too far (and suffers from too-good production) to really rouse me after a couple listens. Harpoon Guns are still actual teenagers (I think) and so manage to make actual teenager hardcore that's both dumb and exciting ("she'll spread her legs for you/she'll spread her legs for me/she's got 20 cases of VD"). —Cuss Baxter (Square Wave)

#### HEARTATTACKS, THE: *Hangin' on, Waste My Time b/w*

*Rejected at the High School Dance: 7"*  
Go ahead. Mark up the magazine. Draw a line from one column to the next and match them up. Any combination will help you understand where Sweden's

The Heartattacks are coming from and you'll see that you really can't lose with any of the possibilities.

Little Richard	Devil Dogs
Jerry Lee Lewis	The Jewws
Pre-marital sex	Leg Hounds
Unprotected sex (pre '70s)	Saints
Puking on yourself	Teengenerate
Projectile vomiting	Ramones

—Todd (High School Reject)

#### HOMEMADE KNIVES:

##### *No One Doubts the Darkness: CD*

Art school dinner party music. I highly doubt that this dinner party would have a theme. Foucault would be discussed incorrectly alongside existentialism. Lots of skirts with fall boots would be sported. A turtleneck or two would complete the scene. The appetizers would probably involve crackers and no one involved would get laid that night. —Megan (Triple Stamp)

#### HOMOSTUPIDS: *The Glow: 7" EP*

Deranged, spitty, and lo-fi, they bring to mind a meaner Reatards or a garage-damaged Negative Approach. (Or, if this helps you: The Dirtys.) Broken knife, dirty needle, rusty chains, in-the-basement punk rock. Comes in a simple white paper sleeve with a picture that looks like a Vietnam veteran-era tattoo of a skull with a lightning bolt through it. Well done. —Todd (My Mind's Eye)

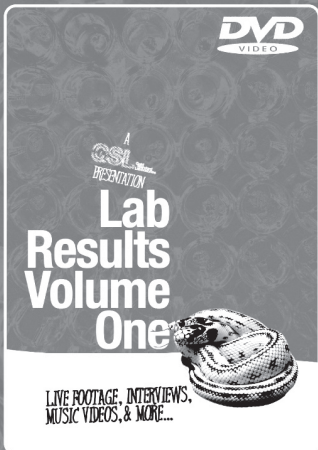
#### HOW WE ARE: *Self-titled: CD*

This is straight edge hardcore from the Northeast. You can't understand a word, even with the lyrics sheet. The music is tight, concise, chunky riffage.

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Growing up, I heard my fair share of Gorilla Biscuits, Token Entry, Earth Crisis and assorted other NE straight edge bands. While this release has the energy and passion of fists raised with black X's, I still prefer to pound a beer and fight other causes, like say, senseless war for instance. Revelation could totally release this: good stuff, albeit not for me. —Buttertooth (Stop Whining, Start Winning)

#### HOWITZER: *Police State*: CD

Second release from these hardcore thrash rockers. If Udo from Accept got on the wrong tour bus one morning, and ended up playing with D.R.I. that night, then you may get a clue about this band's sound. Loud, heavy and angry—this record packs a punch. Songs like "Inciting a Riot" and "Police State" should probably not be played at your next family BBQ. Not for the weak, but I think this band has some great chops. This record proves they have the will to live up to their potential. —Sean Koepenick (Hazard Hill)

#### IN DEFENCE: *Twin Cities Crew: 7" EP*

Does the word "charming" get my ass beat for describing a youth crew record? If you dig 7 Seconds' *Skins*, Brains and Guts or Gorilla Biscuits' self-titled album—tight musicianship, searing guitars, shout outs to bands they like, and thumbs down to smoking and drinking—this'll be right up your alley. And, although I've never I felt it necessary to grab a music-instructed ethos by the ears to rally against the world—even twenty years ago when I

first heard Minor Threat—In Defence, well, they play really well, pack a metal-less hardcore punch, and sound like they're having fun, so who am I to begrudge 'em? Fronted by Ben Crew of Sweet J.A.P. and The Divebomb Honey. —Todd (Give Praise)

#### INSTRUMENTAL QUARTER:

##### *Traffic Jam*: CD

Very interesting instrumentals, featuring violin along with guitars, drums and keyboards. Sometimes ethereal and contemplative; sometimes driving and energetic. More jazz than anything else, but certainly not the way Dizzy Gillespie and Louis Armstrong played it. Probably not for everyone, but I liked it. If you're looking for something different, *Traffic Jam* could be just what the doctor ordered. —Brian Mosher (Sickroom)

#### INSUICIETY: *Believe and Die*: CD

When someone said that there is a song for every emotion, they were right. As soon as the music drizzled out the speakers, I had images of being extremely stoned or picturing the end of the night drinking when you are the last one standing. Surreal and depressing. Seven song release from this female-led band out of Germany in the doom or sludgcore vein barely tracing the edge of playing too slow. Vocals that have a pained and despaired delivery adds to the depressing sounds it is accompanying. The musicianship is top-notch with interesting guitar riffs and well thought out drumming that keeps things interesting. The bass

seems to be a little buried in the mix and could be pulled forward a little bit to add a stronger bottom tone. But bits and pieces do jump out reminding me that it is there. From this introduction, I will be keeping my ears to the ground to see what comes out of this outfit in the future. —Donofthedeath (Crimes Against Humanity)

#### INSURGENT KID: *Paranoia*: CD

Like a good knife; from the first couple of notes, you can see it's stainless, it's perfectly balanced, and it cuts effortlessly. Umea Sweden's Insurgent Kid have some members of the dearly missed DS-13, play like they're fueled by early Black Flag's actual sweat, and make you realize: fuck, I know what's coming—short, anxious, sharp lunges. But in the right hands it's, once again, samurai-level, tension-filled, slashing hardcore and I'm a sucker for it. Thanks. —Todd (Wasted Sounds)

#### JACK SAINTS, THE:

##### *Rock and Roll Saved Our Lives...*

##### *But Now It's Trying to Kill Us!*: CD

First off-great sound bites in between songs. I won't name 'em since I'm sure none of 'em are cleared, but who cares? Hard driving Detroit-style rock from San Fran? Go figure. I think it's against the law to have song titles like "Cockblocked" and "Generation Gangbang" and suck. I really do. These guys are well within their rights and if you like raw punk with a bit of melody, this may save you too. Did I just hear someone rock a banjo solo

in "Last House on the Left?" That's insane! —Sean Koepenick (Scarey)

#### JDJ BAND: *Cruel Way*: CD

JD Jackson, formerly of the Boston band The Destroyed, presents us with this solo recording, accompanied only by his own guitar and the drumming of a fifteen year-old girl named Misty. I'm just not sure why. It's boring, with long monotonous guitar solos and JD's gravelly vocals muttered with just a hint of melody. I can't think of anything positive to say about this one. —Brian Mosher (RPG)

#### JEFF: *Castle Storm*: CD

A lot of times a two people rock combo don't gonna cut it—no question, Mark—but here's a time where it's cut it with righteous and fearsome serrations. In addition: charm and style. Wit, too? Probably, but they sent no lyrics sheet. Brothers J(ake) and J(amin) Orrall from a bunch of other bands (including Be Your Own PET who, no, I've never heard, but I bet they're good with a name like that) play mostly guitar and drum at around eighteen and twenty years of ages and channel all that short-lived energy and lack of buzz-killing bass player (unless there is one) into a thoroughly nice heap of rock'n'roll tunes (with also moments of fantastically pleasant keyboard fingering for space-outting or breath-catching, as on the fourteen-minute "Track 13"). There's moments of fraternity with other duos the White Stripes and the Immortal Lee County Killers I, but even more moments of

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confident crashy unclichee(d)s)punk(y) rock with even fewer moments of playful Sonic Youthy squall, and drums almost all the time. On top of all that, the production is GREAT; everything can be heard and the guitar sounds like a gorilla with an electric punching machine. Except when it's not supposed to. —Cuss Baxter (Infinity Cat)

#### JOE JACK TALCUM:

##### **Home Recordings 1984-'97: CD**

The strangest thing about getting this in the mail is that I'd been listening to The Dead Milkmen's *Big Lizard in My Backyard* almost nonstop for four days after not even looking at it for years. (I'd only listened to the CD once since I bought it years after never getting my commercial cassette back from a friend in high school. Attn: Joey Costa, I still remember...) Joe Jack Talcum was the singer and guitar player for The Dead Milkmen, who were probably my first favorite punk band when I was in the fifth grade (and have maintained a pretty special place in my heart since). These recordings stray pretty far from what was done with The Dead Milkmen (with the possible exception of some of the tracks recorded between '84 and '87). I can see a lot of fans not really getting into this, but it suits me just fine. A lot mellower (as it is just him, mostly with an acoustic guitar) than I'd expected, but it's turned into some nice down-time reading music for me. It was nice to see another side to it all. —Megan (Valient Death)

#### JOSH PLEMON AND THE LONESOME DRIFTERS/ THE ACCELERATORS: Split:7"

What we have here is a country version of the Clash's *Bankrobber* done by Josh Plemon And The Lonesome Drifters. It has a western gallop feel to it and is done well. The original is still better—interesting interpretation though. The Accelerators's song is forgettable old school garage punk. This won't be getting too many spins on my record player. —Buttertooth (self-released)

#### KINGS OF NUTHIN':

##### **Over the Counter Culture: CD**

Like the Mighty Mighty Bosstones and Hi-Fi & the Roadburners. Looks good on the platter, but I'm afraid that dish has already been served. —Jessica T (Sailor's Grave)

#### KITTY AND THE KOWALSKIS:

##### **Chinese Democracy: CD**

Kitty And The Kowalskis apparently love The Ramones. They even dedicate the album to them and have songs called, "Oh Dee Dee" and "Joey's Song." It's too bad that they are nowhere near as fun or interesting. The first few songs are easy enough to get through; sugary but tight pop punk sung by a follower of Deborah Harry, but it's all the bullshit high school lyrics whining about boys that start to make the rest of the record unlistenable. —Comrade Bree (Amp)

#### KNUT: Alter: CD

Remixes of flat he-metal band Knut by folks such as KK Null, Asmus Tietchens, JK Broadrick (Godflesh),

Mick Harris (Napalm Death), and Dalek take something ugly and turn it (mostly) into something...well, ugly, but more interesting (mostly). Minute samples transform into seething drones that obscure the formerly overbearing gruntvox, or single guitar chunks repeat on end, dumbing the whole thing down to a primal level (not that Knut isn't dumb enough already; they just pretend they aren't, and ther's your problem, ma'am). Otherwise, a few tracks are more beat-oriented and fruitier than a homosexual pomegranate, but the majority smash Knut's lunky head into concrete chunks and then throws them for stepping stones into flowing sewers of ambient noise. —Cuss Baxter (Hydra Head)

#### LEFT ALONE: Dead American Radio: CD

Faux-anthem punk fodder that is about as hollow and devoid of edge as your average Rancid album. Their attempts to ape that nouveau Social Distortion "edge" are especially embarrassing, and their ska is an affront to Jamaican music. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hellcat)

#### LILLINGTONS, THE:

##### **Technically Unsound: 3 x CD**

How did I miss these young roughnecks from Wyoming in 1996? What the hell was I doing back then? Nothing worthwhile is the answer. But I have time to make up for my past sins. First stop, buying this kick ass box set. Three CDs that include the *Shit Out Of Luck* LP in its original form and a 2003 remix. The *Nothing Cool* split LP, the *Lost My Marbles 7"*, the previously

unreleased *Stupid World* EP. Plus a ton of live material from The Jam Room in Columbia, SC. Wow—this is thick. "I Don't Think She Cares," "Smart Ass," "Reform School," "The Day I Went Away." I could go but this issue would run out of paper. If you like punk with a pop edge like he Ramones, The Dickies, The Zeros and others in that vernacular, then you need this like a bowl of Cap'n Crunch in the morning. This is E-E-E-SENTIAL. You may go now. —Sean Koepenick (Clearview)

#### LOOPPOOL: Stop the Revolution: CD

When I was a tiny eighteen year-old, I managed to find a copy of Throbbing Gristle's "2nd Annual Report" in a little record store in St. Augustine, Florida on the way to Disney World with the family (I also had a fellow Disney World patron greet me with a "Flex your head!", but I'll save that one for another time). The night we got back to West Virginia, I put on the TG record as I was going to bed and ended up having to get up and take it off after the light was out, it creeped me out so thoroughly. This here Looppool would likely do the same thing if I weren't now all grown into a giant thirty-eight year-old. Built mostly on a foundation of swelling and ebbing feedbacks or synth tones or something, and then decorated with various crackly or echoey or boomy samples (even the one that sounds like a table tennis match manages to be vaguely unsettling, in context, especially when it gets interrupted by the one that sounds like machine gun fire), these ten tracks are like concise nightmare soundtracks. —Cuss Baxter (Sycophanticide)

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**MAGNET BLANKETS, THE:****Self-titled: CD-R**

Here's some fine catchy acoustic folk punk from North Dakota. The packaging consists of a Zip-Lock bag with the band's name written on the front, and includes a fine hand written track listing sheet of yellow lined paper. I like it. Much like it's packaging, the music is minimalist and charming, although poorly recorded. I could see these guys getting something released on Plan-It-X records someday. It's got that kind of feeling. It gives me the warm fuzzies. —Newtim (This Could Work)

**MAJOR ACCIDENT:****Massacred Melodies: CD**

Funny how the mind works sometimes. It's been many a moon since last I heard these kids and totally remember them falling in the Slade-influenced camp of Oi bands. Well, imagine my surprise when what came blaring out of my speakers sounded more like early Peter And The Test Tube Babies instead. Not that that's a bad thing, 'cause aggressive, prime-grade '80s U.K. punk is more than worth a listen; it's just my memory of them sounded considerably more poppy than the reality. Go figure. What's here is the bands debut album and tracks from a couple of singles as a bonus. Heartily recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

**MANIKINS, THE:****Spend the Night Alone: 7"**

Like fellow Swedes, Randy, these guys have the *Back to the Future* capability

to seamlessly shuttle through the roots of rock'n'roll but never forget that it's 2006. Take the "fully dressed on stage, but mentally fucking your girlfriend" capability of Chuck Berry, the "how dare you steal something from the U.S.A. and turbocharge it, you tricky bastard"ness of Japan's Firestarter, and the "They're probably got nominated for a Swedish Grammy" sound, and it's difficult for me not to like. It's like being playfully slapped by someone who just poured you a glass of champagne right after telling you a joke: bubbling, broken glass, chipped tooth fun. Limited to 500, white vinyl. —Todd (Plastic Idol)

**MEMBERS, THE:****Uprhythm, Downbeat: CD**

This reissue of the band's third and final album sees them veer away from the reggae-tinged punk of their early years and embrace the world-funk fusion sound popularized by bands like Talking Heads. The result is very '80s sounding, with lots of horns and at certain points actually sounding a bit like Oingo Boingo, with more than a passing interest in African rhythms. Although this might sound scary to most, the result is a surprisingly strong album, which actually shouldn't be that much of a surprise considering how consistently good the Members had been on prior endeavors. This may not be "punk" to some, but it is quite a good listen nonetheless. Fans of '80s pop would be wise to note that two versions of the band's American hit, "Working Girl" can be found here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

**MERCY KILLERS / ENEMY ROSE:****And to Become One: Split CD**

Sometimes people start bands because they are good and care about the music they're making. Other times, it appears to be a sweet showcase for them to show off their well-rehearsed scowls and poses in their perfect makeup and hair. But dudes, there's this thing called the internet that you can do that on. Sure, you might not get as many friend requests on your 'space, but for people like myself who have to listen to this drivel, please consider us. —Megan (I Scream)

**MIGRA VIOLENTA:****Holocausto Capitalista: LP**

Hailing out of Argentina, this band plays a symphonic soundtrack of pure venomous rage. The anger, speed and sound remind me of Los Crudos. The Spanish lyrics over a barrage of super fast thrash are the markers that makes me think that. From reading the translations, the lyrics are blunt and compassionate of the things that piss this band off. I believe environment plays a big roll in this. I'm not sure how the balance of wealth versus poverty is tipping the scale in Argentina. I would believe that poverty is the overall winner. Here in the states, we have a lot of privilege and wealth. In other countries where there is not an overabundance of material items and luxuries, I would believe that it fuels the rage in the creation of music. So I picture these punks who are shunned because, from what I remember, the country has a strong religious base,

they are martyrs. On top of being poor, because of the lifestyle they chose, they saw with clear eyes the injustices of life when you do not conform. So the music is pissed, fast to express the anger, and feels real because it is coming from the heart. I hear a possibility that they might tour North America. I would love to witness the music firsthand. —Donofthead (Profane Existence)

**MISCHIEF BREW:****Songs from Under the Sink: LP**

I usually have a quick disregard for one man shows or folk punk or the like, but I had the opportunity to see this one man show called Mischief Brew at my local DIY venue. He brought a crowd uncommon to the venue that was very noticeable when I had first arrived. So, I was skeptical of what was going to transpire. A gentleman plugged in an acoustic guitar into an amplifier and the small but energetic crowd rushed forward to the stage. Song after song, the crowd sang along. Many of the punks that frequent the venue to see crust shows were interspersed in the crowd and were singing too. That sight brought out excitement in me witnessing the moment. This bard was playing music that is described as "acoustic anarcho ballads with tricks galore" that the audience learned the lyrics and sang along. Knowing the lyrics showed that his ideology was soaked into the masses appreciating the performance. If all bands could have that honor, they would achieve the ultimate experience when playing live. It is like witnessing a new generation

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Shane MacGowan with a new bunch of admirers. —Donofthedeath (Fistolo)

#### **MITRA: *All Gods Kill*: CD**

The best way to describe this is mid '90s grunge meets early '90s metal, but it's made in the year 2006. My buddy Arlen described it best when he said, "It's like Metallica meets Neurosis, without the off chance that it will ever be catchy." But even after that harsh statement he still said he liked it and that the production is really good and if you're into metal you should probably get drunk and play it really loud. Plus the album art is cool. —Daryl (Idol)

#### **MODERN MACHINES / *Blotto*: *Head Hurt: Split 7" EP***

Modern Machines: Yep. They've won me over. It's like they've gotten the biggest-ever wad of Silly Putty, spread it over a large map of the best of Midwestern punk rock, pressed down firmly, spilled a space bag of wine spiked with crushed Adderall all over it, and, instead of copying everything backwards, have wadded that Putty into a high-bouncing, dirty ball of fun. My three favorite tracks by them. *Blotto*: You know what? Fuck Japan. Fuck those guys for taking everything we do and making it better. Fuck their computer chips and fuel efficient cars and vending machines with clean underpants and bands that shame ours by rediscovering what's already discarded, yet finding how to turbocharge pop punk and made it entirely great and crunchy, like a fresh bowl of cereal (but with gasoline, instead of milk), once again. —Todd (Snuffy Smiles!)

#### **MODERN MACHINES / *If I Had A Hi Fi*: *Hot Nuggets*: CD**

Yay! The best and by far the most ridiculous band in Milwaukee (Modern Machines) team up with If I Had A Hi Fi for a CD that is roughly comparable to Cinnamon Toast Crunch! Yes, it's just that good! They cover each other's songs, Mission of Burma, random other stuff, and it sounds so good! Modern Machines play music that sounds like a combination of Husker Du, Bruce Springsteen, and the Devil Dogs (yes, strange but true!), and If I Had A Hi Fi plays music that sounds like Milwaukee plus Mission of Burma! My one complaint? The cover of Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner (originally be Warren Zevon) better be a joke. —Maddy (Crustacean)

#### **MURDER DISCO X: *Ground Zero: Stuttgart*: LP**

Another band that has been around for more than ten years, and I hear them for the first time now. This band from Germany might have flown under my sights but is in focus now. Punk that plays a straight forward power brand of punk. Kind of gave me the feeling of listening to the first MDC record or hearing Negative Approach. But also has the sound '88 hardcore that came out of the East Coast. The power that comes thru the speakers is undeniable. Two covers of Terveet Kadet and Self Destruct might go unnoticed if you were not familiar because they made it their own. Each song has a variance to make it an easy listen from start to finish. I personally

felt there were no fillers to be heard and I continued to flip the record over and over many times before I went to listen to something else. If they ever tour the West Coast, I am so there! —Donofthedeath (Profane Existence)

#### **NECKTIES MAKE ME NERVOUS: *Self-titled*: 7"**

One day, years ago, when I working a coffee job, a guy dressed very similarly to me—T-shirt, jeans, sneakers—came in and looked really jumpy. I didn't ask. He just started talking as I handed him his cup. "I was at the Golden Donut Palace up the street. Two dudes in clown masks came in and held the place up with shotguns. They only took stuff from the men in ties and the rich-looking women. Left all the manual laborers alone." That's always stuck with me. If I ever lead a life of crime, neckties will somehow be used as a barometer. Neckties Make Me Nervous follow suit: it feels like they're holding up rich "picked first in kickball" punk rockers at gunpoint with their stripped-down, gritty DIY punk that's swollen with smarts and well-placed pride in being a societal fuck up, way past the time in life where it's fashionable. Fans of Crimpshrine and Cleveland Bound Death Sentence take note. (Features a member of Pelvis Wesley, too.) Very satisfying. —Todd (Geykido Comet)

#### **NEW LOU REEDS, THE: *Top Billin'*: CD**

The New Lou Reeds are a lot like Gay Dad or the Drugstore Cowboys—you've heard the name but not the music. I mean, I could go on and on about how

stupid the New Lou Reeds' name is. I'll keep it down to one gripe: Why Lou Reed? Papa Reed has released two and a half good albums since leaving the Velvets. That's pretty fucking pathetic. I mean, what other occupation would allow that kind of inconsistency? While at the post office, Charles Bukowski had to throw letters into their respective slots with something like ninety percent accuracy. Had Lou Reed chosen a career at a NYC post office branch, the sour fucker would've been canned on his first day. Fuck Lou Reed. This band should be called The New John Cales. Think about it. *Vintage Violence* is way better than anything Lou did after the Velvets. And I'll stand by that, motherfucker. So you want to hear a review of this record? It's okay. Fuck, not great, but not bad either. It's got a Southern, Compulsive Gamblers touch. It has a singer with a vocal delivery reminiscent of David Thomas from Pere Ubu. And that's about it. A fucking five out of ten: also known as supreme mediocrity. Unless The New Lou Reeds can pick up the fucking pace, all subsequent albums should be called *Rock and Roll Heart* or *Growing Up In Public* (AKA the Reed albums not worth pissing on). —Ryan Leach (Exit Stencil)

#### **NEW MINORITY, THE: *What's Left of Our Freedom*: CD**

I'm not really hearing the death rock influence they purport to have—I'm hearing more Mentally Ill and Saccharine Trust than Christian Death and 45 Grave—but what I am hearing

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is creative, intelligent, very fine punk/hardcore from a band that's obviously got more brains and less desire to follow the herd than many others. Only gripe I have is the mix could've been a lot stronger—burying the guitars is never a good idea. Outside of that, here's hoping these guys are planning to be around for the long haul. —Jimmy Alvarado (Valiant Death)

#### NOFX: *Wolves in Wolves' Clothing*: CD

It seems like the boys have got their mojo workin' on full tilt these days. This CD is so jam packed that they had to leave some recent songs like "There's No Fun in Fundamentalism" for the B-sides pile. But all the hot topics are on display here, told with a healthy dose of sarcasm and contempt. Religion, politics, drugs and drinking are all song fodder. "Seeing Double at the Triple Rock" is a great example as Fat Mike sings— "Its 3 o'clock at The Triple Rock, another round of watching Paddy talk/it's where you wanna get snowed in when you get snowed in." Other tunes that had me spittin' up my Cheerios are "Leaving Jesusland" and "Getting High on the Down Low." But if you want to know what NOFX are about, just listen to "60 Percent", which is their "Treatment Bound" — "We're the self crowned kings of candor, sultans of slander/which mean we make more money/we've got better prescriptions/we own most of our own music/no one's got their hands in our pockets/we don't have management/we get to play loaded/and only 3 months a year." What a fucking life. —Sean Koepenick (Fat Wreck)

#### NOFX: *Wolves in Wolves' Clothing*: CD

Oh no! I must admit that, despite the dangerously-high percentage of baggy pants found on this band's fan base, I've been a huge fan since I was fifteen and spent most of my time telling dumb jokes and drawing even dumber pictures. (Some things don't change.) But this time around they've fucked with the Midwest, and I CANNOT let this stand! Lyrics like, "We call the heartland, not very smartland," and then some ramblings about how everyone in the mighty Midwest hates gay people and immigrants. Untrue, says I, from my hometown of Milwaukee (first city to elect a socialist mayor)! In the name of all things cheese-based, I must give this album, despite its referencing of the Triple Rock and Paddy (D4), two thumbs down! Goddamn west coast! This is Special K. Yuck! —Maddy (Fat Wreck Chords)

#### O PIONEERS!!!: *Black Mambas*: CD

I'll openly admit it: I'm a huge fan of Against Me!; I've spent a good deal of time listening to their records. I'd wager to bet that O Pioneers!!! have me licked, though. I mean, they have to have really, really studied AM! or their brains are on the almost exact same wavelength, with the following exceptions: Eric's vocals are more burlappy and don't hold the notes as long or as strong as Tom's. AM! has figured out the backup vocals to an almost Shangri-Las type of effectiveness. OP!!! are still working the dirt through the carburetor. AM! have this preternatural sense of pacing, of knowing when to dip, curl, howl, and

sprint. OP!!! have a couple of speeds: mid-paced and slightly faster than mid-paced. So, here's my two cents: if you're currently way pissed at AM! and are revoking their membership card from your clubhouse, heck, you've got a band that scratches a very similar itch. I look forward to seeing how OP!!! develop themselves. As it stands, super nice dudes, but they're in the musical shadows of whom they admire. —Todd (Team Science)

#### OBSCENE, THE:

##### *Death Rides a Pale Whore*: CD

These frisky Floridians swagger from solid post-Dead Boys punk to balls-out (but mildly less streamlined) Dwarves/Zeke speedcore to mildly synth deathrock and mildly deathy surf rock, shedding scabby hints of Gang Green, The Cramps, Bang Gang, and the Hudson Falcons along the way. Dumb and mean, but fun and dumb. —Cuss Baxter (Teenage Antichrist)

#### OI POLLOI: *Pigs for Slaughter*: CD

A compilation from the two decade running anarcho punk band. It compiles tracks from various sources which is a good start for someone getting into the band. Twenty-three tracks in all, and many on out of print releases. People who have been into the band for awhile, like me, will like the convenience of having a lot of the songs on one disc or for ease to download onto their evil iPod. If this is the introduction, there are many releases out there and a lot of repeats. While it's still available, the band

self-released *Ar Ceol*, *Ar Canan*, *Ar a Mach5* on CD this year. It continues on the legacy of this great band. All the songs on the new release are sung in Gaelic which is the native language of Scotland. So here is a good start point, and I have given you an end to shoot for. —Donofthedeath (Step-1)

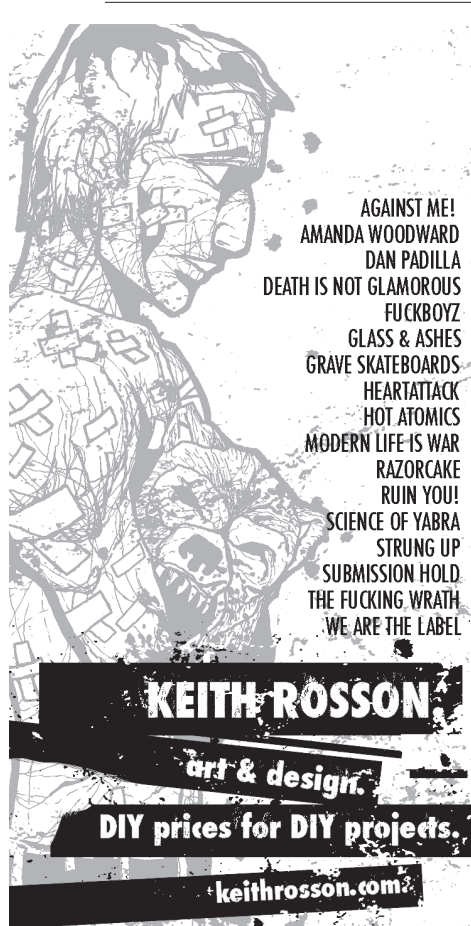
#### OUR LOST CAUSE:

##### *What Will Follow*: CDEP-R

One more shitty Anti-Flag wanna-be band gets thrown into the machine. Complete with horrible, clichéd lyrics about apathy and ignorance, and typical cookie-cutter sound that could be at least fifty bands you can check out at your local Hot Topic listening station. —Newtim (Celebrity Pets)

#### PANIC DISORDER: *Self-titled*: 7" EP

Some folks are of the opinion that Naked Raygun was where it's at (which I don't disagree with), but that Pegboy was too workmanlike (which I disagree with). I think that Pegboy riveted and cleaned their songs down: steely punk expanses of tough-powered pop, where Naked Raygun was adept at getting weirder and more abstract without losing focus. I like 'em both. Panic Disorder take Pegboy's precision then smear vomit on it. The straight-ahead, no bullshit power's still evident. It sounds like they're falling apart, hurtling towards a brick wall, the brakes don't work, and all they're concerned about is that last beer that's rolling away from them under the seat. That's a sound I like plenty. —Todd (Dry Rot)



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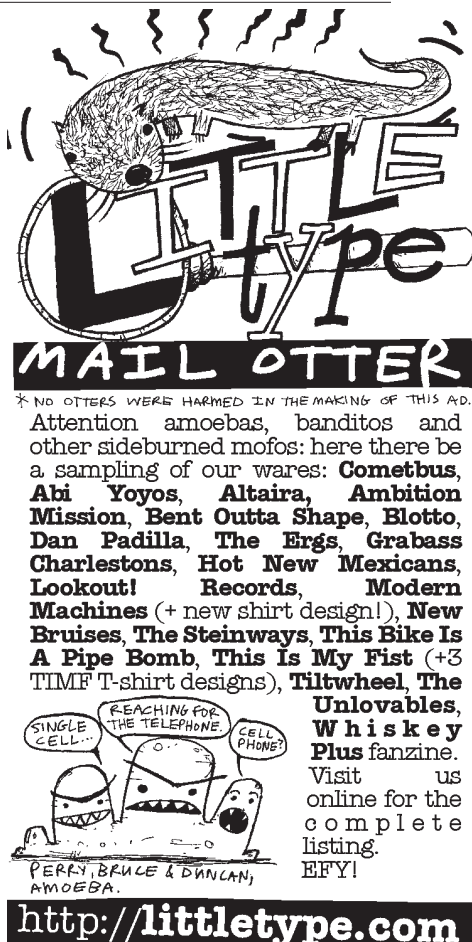
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**PELIGRO SOCIAL: No Religion: CD**

Political punk with a rock/punk feel to it that conjures up memories of Argentina's Dos Minutos, who were woefully underrated, in my opinion. This will be played very loud, very often. —Jimmy Alvarado (Tankcrimes)

**PESD: Politikarepoizonekurvae: LP**

Truly interesting release that reminds me of Ministry and KMFDM. Featuring members from two legendary punk bands out of Poland, the guitarist from Post Regiment and the singer from Tragedia. Industrial drum beats with gloomy synths and keyboard sounds that create moody layered waves of tension. They also throw a lot of fast punk parts into the mix to bring in the aggressive factor. Vocals are delivered in a yelled fashion and sound like both artists participate in the barrage of verbiage. Lyrics that I believe are in the Polish language and translated for the dumb American for convenience. This is exciting to hear this type of sound coming from a couple of punks. It shows that instead of playing by the rules of genres, they want to also explore the possibilities of what can be made. The end product is a masterful and intriguing mixture of guitars and electronics that is nowhere close to being horrible techno dance music. This release should peak the interest of those who sometimes want something different from the norm. —Donofthedeath (Prank)

**PETS, THE: Sticky Situations b/w Never Ask for Help: 7"**

An ex FM-Knives guy and two other dudes step into the power pop arena

and the results have flashes of the fantastic—of Cheap Trick, of The Gain, of Top Ten—but their cheerleader's kicks aren't as high, nor are their chops as Bruce Lee, throat-collapsing as any of the four aforementioned bands at their best. Humble suggestion: cut the lengths, cut the repetition, slightly higher voltage battery in the guitars. There's a good seed in there. —Todd (Sweet Rot)

**PHOBIA/SKRUPEL: Split: CD**

Man, where do I start on this one? Okay, remember the first *Terminator* movie? At the very beginning—where there's this insanely desolate, ruined, metal-scarred wasteland, with various robots patrolling the ground while weird flying machines skim across the sky? Okay. This is the record those robots would be jamming on to get pumped up before going out to seriously shrapnel some human ass. There are fifteen tracks, and I'm pretty convinced the whole album could've easily fit on a 7", if that gives you a little peek into the inner workings of this record. Skrupel's from Germany and they just get in, sever a limb or two, and jet. The song "Human Freakout" consists of the lyrical jewels, "Feeling so fashionably freaky / Is that all that matters in your worthless life / You deserve to suffer." That's the song right there. Phobia's best? I'm torn between "Death To Pigs": "Death to pigs with severed heads." (*But guys, aren't they already dead? If their heads are severed, I mean? Or did you mean to put a comma between 'pigs' and 'with'? Or do you even know?*) or "Macho Man In Denile": "Your a fucking homophobe /

And that I despise / You really want to take it up the ass / And that's alright." Atrocious spelling/grammatical errors aside, I find it stunning that Skrupel's English-is-probably-a-second-language lyrics are on par, if not more articulate, than Phobia's, who are from California. Still, Phobia fares slightly better because they've got the "Ruuuh-ruuh-RUUUUUH!" deep-voiced dude, but they've also got a high-pitched guy who sings like a Fraggles getting a *sans-anesthesia* colonoscopy, which is always nice to hear. The whole album's pretty much one big blast beat with a few slower parts tossed in. Yet another shining example of bands who have the balls to put emaciated corpses and nuclear explosions on their record and then don't do jack shit, lyrically or otherwise, to back it up. But at least they've got tattoos, right? —Keith Rossen (Crimes Against Humanity)

**PHOENIX FOUNDATION, THE: Falling: CD**

I yawned fourteen times listening to this CD. It's not that these guys are horrible; they are just uninspiring. It's roots rock melodious punk. Their label is from Finland, so maybe this is a new thing there, but I doubt it. I did enjoy a song or two that could've been a Lucero riff. I didn't break out my guitar to check, but I have a feeling they use the same chord progressions on at least half the songs. The lyrics are nothing to gaze at with wonderment either. Mix things up a little; diversity is the spice of life. —Buttertooth (Combat Rock Industry)

**PINE HILL HAINTS:****Jack of Diamonds: 7"EP**

It makes absolute sense that DIY punks—the ones born and raised on traditional country—after the initial fast, angry spurt, and facing a world that's neither improving nor a head that feels right screaming the songs of youth, turn back to their roots. Most punks know abandonment. And, culturally, the world of Hank Williams Sr., Merle Haggard, and Johnny Cash, has been left solely as a fallow graveyard in favor for country that sounds like it's selling toothpaste for Wal Mart. Not only do the Haints capture the ghosts of old greats, they've placed those ghosts in their hearts and at your feet. So, even if you don't know that The Haints screen-print their own records, book their own tours, and help out a bunch of people, this 7" still stands up by itself as a testament: that old shack of traditional country is being candlelit once again by society's discards who're playing songs that give me chills. —Todd (Arkam)

**POINTED STICKS:****Waiting for the Real Thing: CD**

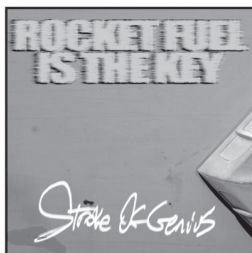
If you have any love for sweet-toothed new wave punk from the original wave, the Pointed Sticks are a go. I put them in that awkward-fitting triumvirate of The Vapors and The Human League: bands perhaps known for one or two songs (like "Turning Japanese"), but much more solid and talented than that. The good news: this here is a collection which includes many unreleased and super-duper-hard-to-find songs. Awesome. These Canadian obscurities

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from the late '70s/early '80s hold up. You get peeks into the rawer beginnings and also the polished bone snap (with sweet candy marrow) of songs that spanned their short career. The so-so news: a good clump of these songs were just recently re-released on the *Perfect Youth* album. The archivist and pure music lover in me would like two totally separated experiences where you'd get to pick which collection of songs fit a mood better. In the end, that's a small quibble that gets shadowed by this simple fact: man, what a great, fun band to listen to. —Todd (Sudden Death)

**PRETTY BOY THORSON & HIS FALLEN ANGELS: Self-titled: 7" EP**

Super low-fi and dirty recording. Then again, the cover is made of a grocery bag type of paper, so that's probably the point. Super-stripped down rock with folk-inspired elements (think *This Bike Is A Pipebomb* or mid-releases *Against Me!*). Overall, reminiscent of bands like *The Measure (SA)*, but without the magic to really grab me. Not a bad EP by any stretch, and probably great to see in a kitchen, basement, or living room. I'll keep my eyes open. —Megan (The Party's Over)

**PREVAIL WITHIN: The Architects of Broken Souls: CD**

Self-described as in "the same bloodline as *Bad Religion*, *Propagandhi*, and *Rise Against*." Besides *Bad Religion*, that pretty much sums it up for me. Leaning more towards *Rise Against* than *Propagandhi*. —Donofthedeath (Mightier Than Sword)

**PROJECT 27: Time to Fold: 7" EP**

Okay, you win; I'm confused. I swear there's a girl in the band, but I check the liner notes for the umpteenth time, and all the names are guy's names. There's no "additional vocals by" credits, but I hear it. It was actually so distracting to me that I ended up trying to just hone in on those parts than listening to the overall sound (even on multiple listenings). But, it's heavier on the pop than the punk, lyrically leaning towards girls who've gone. Not bad, but not strong enough to pull me from distraction into interest on its own merits. —Megan (Don Giovanni)

**RABBIT EARS: EP: CD**

Rabbit Ears is comprised of two members. Jeff Maisaac plays electric drums and keys while Spencer Moody sings, sometimes like Peter Murphy. While this combination could result in disastrous, shitty, art rock, Rabbit Ears rules instead! Think *Atari Teenage Riot* meets *Foetus* at a dance club. Musically this is a convoluted blend of distorted drums and overdriven vocals. Big Black would let them open the show. Stay creepy Rabbit Ears! —Buttertooth (Go Midnight)

**RADICAL ATTACK: Priority: LP**

The hate-edge blasting, vinyl consuming kids will love this shit. It has got the speed and viciousness that make up a good hardcore album, plus it's extremely well put together which is impressive because it's the label's first release. But in the end it's twenty-three tracks of that type of anger which leaves me feeling incredibly disheartened. I'm sure these

guys aren't saints and why they feel they should be able to judge everyone else so belligerently is beyond me. Oh yeah, but it's also on clear vinyl and that's always cool. —Daryl (Vinyl Addict)

**RAMONES: Greatest Hits: CD**

Twenty tracks of standard Ramones fare to introduce those (who have been living under a fucking rock) to quite possibly the world's most perfect rock'n'roll band. The first eleven Ramones slabs are represented here (sans *Halfway To Sanity*) with songs that many a fan have pogoed to over the years, be it at all those wondrous Ramones gigs, or in the noisy privacy of their very own bedrooms/house parties. A great way to get your cool little nephew/niece off on the right foot, absolutely. But if you were a genuinely cool aunt or uncle, you'd buy 'em the entire catalog, one b-day and Xmas gift at a time. —Designated Dale (Rhino: www.rhino.com)

**RED ANIMAL WAR:**

**Seven Year War: CD**

I wanted to like this, but after repeated listenings, there was just something missing. I've heard worse, believe me. But this was slightly off the mark. A collection of recordings from different eras, studio and a few live ones. Plus a lot of videos. That video for *FFB* was a tease, dudes, and you know it! —Sean Koepenick (End Sounds)

**REDBEARDS: Self-titled: CD**

It's good to see a band that can appreciate the off kilter, yet melodious stylings of *Archers Of Loaf*. This New Orleans

based band caught me off guard. This is easily one of the best releases I've heard in a while. The noisy parts are very climactic, and there are anthems buried in the dissonant punkishness of it all. The elongated sustains of the shrieking guitars and the screamed vocals stray a bit from typical indie rock but embellish the ability to appreciate mellow music and still rock out. This is for fans of the indie rock underground around the mid '90s. —Buttertooth (Heartbreak Beat)

**RESISTANT CULTURE: Welcome to Reality: CD**

I finally had the chance to see this band a couple of months ago. I was excited to see Tony Militia's latest music endeavor. People from the early '80s East L.A. scene might remember *Resistant Milita (Jimmy?)*. Seeing a person from that far back that you know is always welcome. They put on a great performance. On recording, they are equally as exciting. Dis-crust meets metal. Self-described as hardcore meets tribal grind, they pack a powerful punch with a message. On this recording, there is the addition of Jesse Pintado (*Terrorizer/Napalm Death*) as a second guitarist that was not present when I saw the band live. There was no loss though as main guitarist Katina held her own. Masterful and technical is the drummer Ben, who I believe played in the band *Axiom* in the past. Put all the parts together with bassist Ralph and they are one powerful unit. They also pay homage to *Discharge* by covering *Hear Nothing. See Nothing. Say Nothing*. Metal fans and crust fans should find this appealing. I heard in

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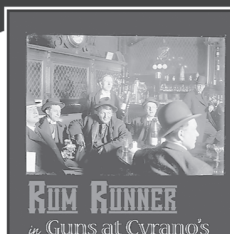
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the works is a new album by Tony Militia and Jesse Pintado resurrecting Terrorizer. I am excited to hear the results of that project. If you never heard Terrorizer's *World Downfall* LP, you are not a true grind fan. —Donofthead (Seventh Generation)

#### RETCHING RED:

##### **Scarlet Whore of War: CD**

A follow up to their amazing CD, *Get Your Red Wings*, Retching Red continue to show that they are pissed. The first time I listened to their debut, I thought the singer sounded like Cinder from Tilt but was way too pissed sounding. I was shocked to see that it was her! Man she sounded venomous. Teamed with Cyco Mike from Oppressed Logic, they banded together to throw down some mean ass shit. On this release, the energy level continues with their brand of fast punk. But they are maturing by writing more interesting songs. Instead of coming balls-out, they bring you up and down and take you for a ride. Cinder sounds as mean as before, but adds more variety in her delivery. The production sounds better than the last time, giving them a more powerful sound. Mike's bass sound is solid and provides a strong backbone to the music. The drummer and guitarist are different from the last recording. Guitarist Jake seems to have gelled well with the band without making the band sound completely different. New drummer Adam sounds to me like he know how to control the sticks. Worth his weight in gold, he is the final piece that makes the band sound cohesive.

I'm really bummed that I missed them on their latest tour. Logistically it didn't work, but I will try not to miss them the next time around. —Donofthead (Rodent Popsicle)

#### RETISONIC: Levittown: CDEP

The power trio that put the R in rock is back. Six song teaser for their upcoming full length. This one really shows the band stretching its wings with great effect. One song is a rework of a tune from their last record, but the rest are all new. If you like Girls Against Boys, Grant Hart, and early Jawbox, you'll find something here for you. The title track and "In a Mean Town" are the edgy rockers, but I think right now I prefer one of the acoustic songs. "Sweet Mess" is sticking in my head and I want it to stay there. "I don't care how long it takes you to get it right or your own perfect style of wrong." Farrell, Gorelick and Kimball have again delivered. Just waiting for the next Retisonic bomb to blow the jaded music scene apart like a rocket launcher. —Sean Koepenick (Ascetic)

#### RIFU: Bomb for Food, Mines for Freedom: CD

Thumbs Down: Packaging. I hate when labels send CDR's with no packaging with some bio sheet. Makes it even harder for a reviewer to even listen to it. The intro track was good giving you a feeling like something ominous was coming. Second track, "Sold Out World," had that Tragedy, From Ashes Rise sound going. A little bit of screamo vocals added. I was thinking cool, good

song. But afterwards, things started going downhill for me. That's where the screamo vocals would be in every song and even more prominent. That got irritating real quick. Fast forward. More good songs, but the vocal delivery thing has become overdone for me. MTV kids might dig that stuff, but this old fart doesn't. —Donofthead (Go Kart)

#### RIVERBOATS GAMBLERS:

##### **Keep Me from Drinking b/w No Fair: 7"**

I was traveling from Flagstaff, Arizona, back to Los Angeles. I'd gotten a early burn of the Gamblers' full length, listened to the shit out of it, formed some opinions (see issue #32), and, for some reason, didn't open up the fully dressed CD and play it. Sean Carswell, who I was traveling with, should really be a DJ. He's got a natural voice for it, is an easy-going storyteller, and is quick with his fingers. Yeah, it was a CD in a truck's stereo, but I didn't see him do it when it happened. The entire album played. Fuck, I love *To the Confusion of Our Enemies*. It filled up the desert landscape rolling by. It made time pass pleasantly. We got out in Kingman to fill up, right when the album ended, almost as if on cue.

"Dude, that's the finished record?" I asked.

"Yeah."

"They cut that 'Unicorn' spoken word jumble in the middle, then?"

"No."

"I didn't hear it," I said.

"I skipped it. It bothers me," Sean

said matter-of-factly. Beef jerky was purchased.

Here's my two cents from this episode: "No Fair" works perfectly in that "Unicorn" slot and "Keep Me from Drinking" would be a great ender. I'm gonna burn myself a copy, follow my own advice, and make the almost perfect record, almost more perfect. —Todd (Volcom)

#### ROGUE NATIONS, THE:

##### **The American Ruins: 7" EP**

Chris Peigler, who was in My So-Called Band, is a tremendously earnest and hard-working guy. (He does stuff for *Razorcake* on occasion, like the Signal Lost interview in this issue.) The Rogue Nations have great elements: an almost Feederz-like guitar weirdness that's often wired over the top of songs, intelligent lyrics (including an homage to awesome lady Alice Bag), and, at times, a nice, bouncy quality. But there's something holding me back from flat-out praise. It seems like too much is being tried at once and it lacks uniqueness. Like, the songs could be more dynamic. Or the drums could be played harder. Something. For some reason, this EP just seems breathless—there aren't any dips and valleys or catch and releasing—it's just rolling and toiling. I really, really want to like it more. It's definitely not bad. I just think they could be better. —Todd (Suicide Watch)

#### ROY AND THE DEVIL'S MOTORCYCLE: Because of Women: CD

Not fucking shabby, kids. These sons of bitches remind me of the Dream

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Syndicate back when Steve Wynn knew how to write a song (AKA *The Days of Wine and Roses*. Jesus Christ—my heart palpitates just thinking about that record). What's really cute about *Because of Women* is its addition of a couple covers by Chuck Berry and Elmore James, as if you couldn't spot its influences by the opening track. Seriously, this shit reminds me of *Cannery Row* and a band covering the Velvets. That's a goddamn good thing. Probably the best thing I've heard since The Gossip covering Aaliyah or Miss Alex White and the Red Orchestra's debut. Note to Voodoo Rhythm person in charge of sending out albums: send vinyl next time. Had you done that, you'd be receiving the ancillary benefit of me spinning this fucking thing at sordid drinking establishments all over the city of Los Angeles.

Your pal,  
Ryan Leach  
(Voodoo Rhythm)

#### ROYDEN:

##### **Best Friends Our Worst Enemies: CDEP**

This band has some kind of unhealthy obsession with storks—it's even part of their website. Not sure what the deal is with that, but moving on to the matter at hand. The music you scream—what about the music? Yes, yes I was getting to that. Bits of emo, but not enough to be entirely unlistenable. The music is competent, and there are actually some vocal melodies sprinkled in this mini smorgasbord. Imagine a bit of At The Drive In with Story Of The Year. It would probably sound better in my

car going 90 MPH on the freeway with all the windows down late at night, but I have responsibilities now, man! So I at least can't do that until Friday after a couple cocktails. (In the passenger seat, of course!) "Made in Lies" is the break-out track on this slab, as they say in the biz. Fun, unimportant fact—their singer's God given Christian name is Treebo. It says so right in the liner notes. —Sean Koepenick (Hopeless)

#### **RUDE BOYS, THE: Ska Fever: CD**

A re-release from a short lived band put together by Roddy Moreno of The Oppressed. Unlike the oi sound of his main band, this band played ska in the two tone and reggae variety. They were short lived by being only in existence for a year. It was cool at first, but wore thin quickly. Nothing really original. —Donofthedeath (Step 1)

#### **RUNNAMUCKS: Inferno: CD**

Is this the same band that put out *On the Brink* a few years ago? That was a great punk record. This sounds like mid '80s period rock made by former punk bands. The only track that sounded punk to me is "Screwed." How disappointing. —Donofthedeath (Six Weeks)

#### **RUNNING ON FUMES:**

##### **The Beginning of the End: CD**

This was recorded at Westbeach Studios, where just about every single Epitaph band from the mid to late '90s eventually found themselves recording at one time or another. And I think that's just about the most telling thing about this band—if you're looking for

a comparison, how about this: these guys sound *exactly* like a prototypical Epitaph band from that period. Whether or not that's a good thing is up to you. Pickslides that morph into guitar solos, pretty catchy stuff, group vocals smattered throughout, lyrics that tackle some cryptic emotional dissatisfaction or another, that type thing. They spent some work on it (four months in the studio apparently, recording and mixing the thing), and there's some passion there, but I can't help but feel that there's somewhat of a glut of bands who've already tilled this ground pretty solidly before these cats rolled up. Not that that, like, disqualifies them from playing music or anything; just means you're gonna have to pay more attention to the chops coming out of your amp and less to the ones sprouting on your cheeks in order to get my head bobbing along. —Keith Rosson (Fallen Angel)

#### **SAINTE CATHERINES, THE: Dancing for Decadence: CD**

I had the pleasure of drinking with these Canucks in Gainesville, FL for Fest III. I can honestly say that they live what they sing about: pissed about the state of the world, government corruption, dispossessed poor, power in the hands of the rich, etc. This record, as well as their last, is an angry yet melodic voice of discontent. Scum pride for the dirty drunk in all of us. Raise one fistful of whiskey and the make the other available for throwing the Molotov cocktail to burn down City Hall. Best line, "I'm waiting for a sign from god or his son. Don't call him Christ. I lost

faith years ago when I came to love life." They have a sense of humor as well, saying in the song "Emo-ti-Cons: Punk Rock Experts," about themselves nonetheless, "They're a clone of Born Against, I can hear some Lifetime, he can't sing, the drummer's not tight, and there's no passion." There's a song apparently playing on the best Refused record entitled, "The Shape of Drunks to Come". This is their first Fat Wreck release. I think The Sainte Catharines beats the hell out of Lagwagon and Face To Face. —Buttertooth (Fat Wreck)




#### **SAIRAAT MIELET:**

##### **Controversial History 1988-1992: CD**

Loud, fast and fucked up—can't ask for much better than that when you're talking about Finnish hardcore, and these kids deliver on that promise and then some. Two EPs are collected here and both fall somewhere in the "Bermuda Triangle" of hardcore, meaning that if you take Assfort and teach them to play Raw Power's early set at a Scandinavian hardcore show, you'll pretty much get this. The whole thing is totally over the top in all the right ways and, best of all doesn't rely on cheap "blast beat" parlor tricks to up the intensity. The lyrics? They were supposedly a "hard line" straight edge band, but considering the lyrics would be no doubt unintelligible even with a lyric sheet in hand, homeboy could be screaming at me to ingest road apples with a side of peach cobbler and a butane cocktail chaser and I'd be none the wiser. —Jimmy Alvarado (Six Weeks)

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#### SCHOOLYARD HEROES:

##### **Fantastic Wounds: CD + DVD**

Seattle band that are apparently quite the shit in their hometown. Unfortunately, I had a tough time hearing why. The vocals are too overwrought and operatic. Incessant guitar noodling and off the wall song titles do not make a good album. Also, the bonus DVD contains one video. A live concert video of one song. Why would I ever watch one song ever again on this DVD? Marketing 101: This should have been an enhanced part of the original CD. But it will make a cool drink coaster with the Frankenstein cover art. Did I just hear this singer do some yodeling? –Sean Koepenick (The Control Group)

##### **SCHULZ: What Apology: CD**

Weird one, this is. Starts off in bad metal/rock territory, stops off in industrial thrash metal land, returns to bad metal/rock territory, then ends things off with two decent industrial dance tracks. Truly a mixed bag here, where what's good here is quite good and what isn't sucks somethin' fierce. –Jimmy Alvarado (Sudden Death)

##### **SEX ROBOTS: Self-titled: CD**

It's like if the spirit of Killed By Death was fused to pop punk. The Sex Robots sound like an obscure, smoking, gawky, retarded Midwestern band on a limited budget. It's like the Gizmos or Unnatural Axe or Zero Boys rammed up against early Descendents. Actually, I'm astonished not more bands have done this: take that early, anonymous, anxiety-riddled punk from shit-tiny

towns of the early '80s and channeled its spirit into no-pretense, choking-on-stucco, chain-stores-are-killing America punk in 2006. Recommended. –Todd (Roadhouse Tunes)

##### **SHAPESHIFTER: Self-titled: 7"**

Like The Degenerics, this is another band that my friend Joe had sent to me not knowing I had gotten this for review. Unlike The Degenerics, I'm not really that into what I hear here. I like what he sent; I listened to it over and over. Wait, I'm a complete moron. It's the same exact release. I listened to Joe's copy on my little jambox and I listened to mine on my laptop. World of difference to me. What I thought was tinny sounding wasn't at all. Really lyrical crust that isn't without melody. If, in the song "Feeding the Beast," the lyrics actually correctly spelled when it says, "as the bones enrich the soil under our feat," then I applaud you on your word play (it easily could go over the top, but is always well-balanced, and not a groan was induced). It was suggested that this is reminiscent of Aus Rotten, but seeing as I've avoided them for (apparently misguided) presumptions, I'm not sure. If they are, I might just give Aus Rotten a chance now. A strong release with a cover photo of old cars that had me mesmerized. –Megan (Don Giovanni)

##### **SHARP KNIFE / LOVES SONGS:**

###### **Split: Tape**

Yay! Three Sharp Knife songs and two Love Songs (featuring Craigums!) songs on a tape! Punk rock! Love Songs use the phrase "apples and banaanas" from one

of the most ridiculous children's songs of all time! Score one! Sharp Knife just rocks and rolls until your neighbors are pounding on the wall begging you to turn it down. Punk fucking rock! If this were a cereal, it'd be a single-serving double pack with silly, fun Froot Loops (Love Songs) and amazing, innovative Rice Krispie Treats cereal (Sharp Knife)! I am a dork! –Maddy (Grateful)

##### **SHOTGUN MONDAY:**

###### **Read Compare Adjust: CD**

It's ex-members of two bands whose other members went on to be Sean Na Na, Har Mar Superstar, Pretty Girls Make Graves and These Arms Are Snakes (kind of a weird selling point if you ask me. I mean, I was in a band with people who were later in Avail and the Debbie Harry Band, but that doesn't mean Anxious Poop was any goddamn good) creating scads of mopy tension with their dense guitars and drum-hitting, but frankly the guy's Fread Moon whine kills it for me as often as not (the not times might be when another guy sings, or maybe the first guy just sings quietly). I guess one of the parent bands, Calvin Krime, was on Amphetamine Reptile, though I don't remember them, and that sound is here, but I think they lean more toward a poppier Mergey sound. –Cuss Baxter (Modern Radio)

##### **SOLDIER DOLLS: Self-titled: CD**

Re-recordings by a U.K. punk band initially active in the '80s. A heavy GBH influence is in evidence on songs like "State of Shock," but they've got enough of their own thing going that

they don't come off as a cover band. –Jimmy Alvarado (Longshot)

##### **SORE THUMBS, THE: Listen Up!: CD**

Total Social Distortion and Swingin' Utters thing goin' on here! Catchy, rockin', good stuff! If this were a cereal, it'd be Raisin Bran. Not great, but good! –Maddy (Radio)

##### **STENCH: Moral Debauchery: 7"**

These kids have the perfect U.K. punk look down: magazine cutout letters on the sleeve, a picture of the punk boy on the shutter, the studded jackets, names like "Hooligan" and "Peter Paedophile," the sort of shit that usually gets hammered in by the mall punks. But that doesn't matter, because "Raspberry Cripple" rocks in a stripped down, trashy way that makes my belly feel nice and warm, like when it has just been filled with a few shots of whiskey. Flip the record for two songs that have less excitement, but are almost equally enjoyable. –Comrade Bree (Puke N Vomit)

##### **STEP2FAR / SPIDER CREW:**

###### **Hooligans: CD**

The cover of this album displays a lip being flipped over with the word "HOOLIGAN" tattooed underneath it. It's angry (indignant), it's anthemic (sing along if you wanna), it's New York Hardcore (with the X replaced by machetes). STEP2FAR: This is your standard NYHC that you've been listening to since you were a wee lad. No new ground being broken, but that's not the point. I mean it's all about tradition anyways, right? Where are the

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gang vocals though? Spider Crew: Oh, there are the gang vocals. And not just that, they've got two guys singing. This band is huge! Not only do they have two vocalists, but they have two guitarists, a bassist, and sporadic usage of the infamous double bass. I have the feeling that this band can floor everybody in the Vets Hall when they play. Do you wanna hear another song titled "Punks n' Skins"? If you do then you should buy this split. —Daryl (Street Anthem)

#### SUPREME COMMANDER: Self-titled: CDEP

Three-song demo that sounds better than most band's regular records. Featuring former members of Daycare Swindlers, Latchkey and Wake Up Cold. Tight musical interplay plus cool vocal harmonies make this one a front runner. If bands like Pennywise and Cro-Mags float your boat then you'll be marching in time with this army in no time. Look for more from this outfit in the near future. With a singer named Boo how can they fail? —Sean Koeppenick (a389)

#### THINGS FALL APART: We Are All...: CDEP

Super-serious post-Dag Nasty HARDcore with a guitars that sound like Joe Satriani or one of those ridiculous axe jerkers. Stuff about "There's a crime here that goes beyond denunciation, and there's a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize" and "hey, a silent affliction is heavier to bear. I want you to know I'm here and I'm willing to carry what you let me." Also, "Recorded in the frigid winter months, of years

five and six of the Arbusto Era." —Cuss Baxter (Crustacean)

#### TOUCH ME NOTS: Hey, Television b/w Fucked up Big Time, Celebrity Roast: 7"

Don't let this description turn you off; the band's really good: Velvet Underground mixed with Hank Williams Sr. Imagine an early, thicker-voiced Lou Reed infatuated not with art to stir into his rock, but early and outlaw country, all wound around a self-recorded 7" on a 4-track recording. (It's akin to the spirit of the Bassholes.) There's a subtle, playful, yet obvious attention to songwriting detail that's refreshing: grab-your-date-close Doo-Wop paces seamlessly meld into scream-alongs and I-fucked-ups, then slides back. Great stuff. —Todd (Touch Me Nots)

#### TOXIC NARCOTIC: 21st Century Discography: CD

This collection of pretty much everything this venerated Boston hardcore band has released in the last six years, hence the title, knocks you upside the noggin with twenty-three witherin', barn-bustin' tracks guaranteed to leave your ears bleeding. Few bands have managed to stick it out as long as these kids have (damn near twenty years at this point) and even fewer can claim to consistently pack as much punch. They deal in American hardcore at its finest, blissfully devoid of metal and seriously fucking pissed off. If that's your bag, you really can't go wrong with this disc. There's no label listed on the cover, but given it's Toxic Narcotic we're talkin' about, I'm

guessing you can get it from Rodent Popsicle, which is their label. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

#### TV SMITH: Misinformation Overload: CD

This is an uneven effort from the former Adverts front man. Smith mixes elements of punk, rock, pop, and folk with lyrics aimed at poverty and war. The opening song, "Good Times Are Back," is poppy but sharp with some guitar work resembling that of The Crow's Jim Kaa. Another strong track is the pounding "Bring the Bull Down." The folk sound is heavier on the later tracks, so fans of Billy Bragg would probably like *Misinformation Overload* better than fans of the Adverts would. Smith's relentlessly potent vocals and anguished lyrics pull the album along for a while. In the later parts, however, the songs seem too soft and flat. —Chris Pepus (Boss Tuneage)

#### UNITED STATES: Divorce Songs: CD

A Brooklyn-based, post-punk band that consists of past members of Bent Outta Shape, The Scent Of Human History, and The Insurgent (among others). I definitely like this release. It's no Meneguar record but still good. I hear a punky version of Modest Mouse, which could be horrible, but they pull it off. Maybe it's just the chanting vocals. The band name seems kinda irrelevant to me. Why name yourself after an imperialistic nation? When they stick to their brooding songs it adds another dynamic to the music and comes off more angular and decisive. This is worth checking into. —Buttertooth (Iron Pier)

#### UZEDA: Stella: CD

The arty aggressiveness of their droney, mostly atonal noise rock attack is alluring, but the lackadaisical approach of the singer, who sounds like a narcoleptic cross between Selene Vigil and Björk, prevents the band from pushing things from "not bad" to "holy shit, that was amazing." —Jimmy Alvarado (Touch and Go)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### Funhouse Comp Thing: CD

Thirty-two friggin' bands! Almost all of which have played the Funhouse. If you are unfamiliar with the Pacific NW, The Funhouse is in Seattle. It's this punk club with a really stupid looking clown hanging above the door (I'm not sure what's up with Seattle and stupid looking clowns, but this is only one of three clubs I can think of whom display clowns above their establishments). I wouldn't hold it against them, though. They consistently have really great shows going on there. I've only been there once, but it was a good time. Much like this comp, actually. Some of the tracks worth mentioning are from bands such as The Trashies, Old Haunts, Blank Its, Steaming Wolf Penis, Armitage Shanks, The Cripples, Girl Trouble, and The Gropers. I could easily name off a majority of the bands on here (mostly all lo-fi garage punk) whom I enjoyed, but I am not going to. That would take away the surprise when you see this monster of a comp. It's also a good taste of music coming from the NW right now. Like a little round plastic time capsule that you can hear over and over again. —Newtim (MyFatAss)



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**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Go Cat Go—A Tribute to Stray Cats*: CD**

Fifteen outstanding Stray Cats covers that are honestly a tribute to the golden boys of the first rockabilly revival. Tight, cohesive, well produced and well selected, this CD includes cuts from some of today's favorite psychobilly bands: the Phenomenauts ("Cry Baby"), Os Catalepticos ("Bring it Back Again"), Rezurex ("Runaway Boys"), Hellbillys ("Blast Off") and the Astounding Roy Gorbisons ("Let's Go Faster"). Others include (but not limited to) the Stonecutters, Shark Soup, Batmobile, Koffin Kats, Thee Merry Widows and the Phantom Rockers. Caveat: there's a Reel Big Fish song, on which I have no comment. —Jessica T (Baseline)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Hopelessly Devoted to You Vol. 6: 2 x CD***

This is the sixth installment for Hopeless records. I honestly don't know how Hopeless went so far downhill. They used to put out some pretty amazing bands and now, every new band they release sucks ass. Bands like Amber Pacific, All Time Low, and Ever We Fall stink it up REALLY bad. I thought of why I hate malls and swoop haircuts as I listened to the first CD of the new bands' newest sucky songs. The horrible pop punk even goes acoustic for a few tracks! The only thing that saves this release and makes it possibly sought after is the second CD. Disc two is full of previous Hopeless records releases. 88 Fingers Louie, Against All Authority, Dillinger Four, The Queers,

Fifteen, The Weakerthans, and Samiam all contribute songs. This disc saved Hopeless from putting out total bullshit and also saved face for it to have a decent reputation, at least for their back catalog. The DVD features two songs by The Weakerthans, which was entertaining as well. If you are in need of a couple of Dillinger Four songs, Weakerthans songs, or "Stolen Life" by Fifteen, snag this for a couple of bucks. If not, steer clear of the new Hopeless bands, they are horrible. —Buttertooth (Hopeless/Subcity)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Illegitimate Spawn—The Fuzztones Tribute Album*: CD**

We all know the Fuzztones are popular the world over, but they're also popular across many genres, as demonstrated on this forty-two song double disc from Germany. Bands from Western Europe, the U.K., and North and South America pitch in to show just how influential the Fuzztones have been. It's rock, it's roll, it's psychedelic, it's goth, it's garage, it's country, it's stoned, and then some. A giving gem for musically open-minded, deeply devoted Fuzztones fans. Probably confusing for the rest of us. —Jessica T (Sin)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Music to Make Your Ears Hurt*: CD**

From the people who brought you GG Allin, here's a stellar collection of down and dirty scum rock from the likes of WMFO, Cherry Bombs, Bloody & The Transfusions and more. It is a bit too long (24 tracks, over 72 minutes), but that's often the case with compilations.

You get the idea that all these tracks were recorded in one marathon session, fueled by a truckload of PBR and an endless supply of pepperoni pizza. What could be better than that? —Brian Mosher (Black and Blue)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Punk for Life Volumes Too through III*: CD**

For what is essentially a by-the-book punk comp, there's a nice bit of diversity in sounds here from parrot-core (The Virus) to straight-ahead hardcore (Common Enemy) to full-on singalong stuff (NFI). You get forty tracks total from nearly as many bands, including those mentioned above, Catholic Altered Boys, Cut-Offs, Exit Only, Void Control, Mental Pain, Corrupted Youth and others. Of particular note are two tracks by the always-swell Minor Disturbance, who sound so much like prime Zero Boys it's kinda scary. Overall, this is definitely worth a listen. —Jimmy Alvarado. (Run and Hide)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Punk Rock! 20 Classic Punk Bands from the World of Mystic Records*: CD**

A collection of assorted rarities from the Mystic Records vaults, courtesy of a label that appears to have either reissued or will reissue "vintage" releases from Gene Autry, Hall and Oates, and Rich Little, among others. For those not familiar with the particulars, Mystic was an infamous label in the 1980s notable for putting out seminal recordings by bands like Dr. Know, Ill Repute, NOFX, RKL, the Mentors, Vox Pop, Scared Straight (who later morphed

into Ten Foot Pole, and then Pulley), Doggy Style (a member or two of which are responsible for Kottonmouth Kings) and Powertrip, among others, as well as later releases by Agression, The Faction, Sado Nation, and Government Issue. The label is best remembered by most who were active in the '80s punk scene for unleashing an avalanche of poorly recorded 7"s and compilations of some of the most horrifically generic hardcore imaginable in an apparent "whatever sticks" marketing approach. It is also remembered for controversy over its alleged (non)payment practices to a number of bands for their efforts, a debate that rages to this day in some circles. Tracks here represent some of the Mystic catalog's better moments, with tracks from many of the aforementioned bands, as well as Mystic-exclusive tracks from Suicidal Tendencies, Flower Leperds, White Flag, JFA, Aryan Disgrace and others. Dunno whether any of said bands will receive any royalties for their inclusion here, but it's nice to hear some of these tracks again after many a moon. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.VareseVintage.com)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Summer Sounds: Four Reasons for the Season Vol. 1*: CD**

Ack! I doth grow tired of generic pop punk bands, even those who attempt to pay homage to The King (Brian Wilson) by writing songs about hanging out at the beach. The Blurbs, The Prozacs, Regal Beagle, and The Lebowskis all sound like they've been trapped in a closet with the Queen's *Move Back Home*. Regal Beagle's singer has

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even perfected his vocal stylings to be virtually indistinguishable from Joe King in your local sing-off! Anyway, not only is *Move Back Home* a sub-par Queens album, any band that tries to sound like the Queens ends up sounding like crap. Somehow Joe King himself has, more or less, avoided this fate. How he did it ranks up there with the Shroud of Turin and the sexual orientation of Darby Crash in the list of Greatest Mysteries of All Time! If this were a cereal, it'd be regular Cheerios. It all sounds the same! —Maddy (Cabana 1)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### **To Live and Die in Tampa Bay: CD**

What happens when you take one part metal, one part Tiltwheel, and one part beer? You get bands like The Dukes Of Hillsborough and The Tim Version, of course! This is a comp of Tampa Bay bands. Lots of No Idea-ish punk rock. My favorite? Vagina Sore Jr.! Seriously! And, despite the ridiculous name, they're not a joke band. Gruff vocals, mid-tempo, lotsa breakdowns. You know the drill. Decent stuff. If this were a cereal, it'd be a sample pack with Rice Krispies, Kix, and the occasional Apple Jacks. Pretty good! —Maddy (A.D.D.)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Unsound: CD+DVD*

Epitaph's *Punk-O-Rama* series has now become *Unsound*, and has an expanded musical format. As the label on the case boasts, it now includes emo, screamo, hardcore, punk, and hip-hop. Most of the songs are aggressive but still radio friendly and fit the standard

that one might hear on your average alternative radio station. I didn't like those songs. The ones that I did like are the out-and-out hardcore such as Converge, the tunes by Bouncing Souls and Bad Religion, and the hip-hop stuff from Dangerdome, Sage Francis and From First to Last's "Atticus" remix of "The Latest Plague." While I did not find that a great deal of this record got my blood rolling the way that I would like (the "alternative" sounding songs were remarkably sterile), I also feel that records such of this are either long overdue or too few in number. Punk need not be, nor should it be, about rock'n'roll alone, and the mixing of genres herein is welcome. While I do not like all of the songs, and even outright loathe some of them, as a whole this record works simply as a result of the blessed variety of music. It has a DVD, too, but I didn't watch it 'cause it was live stuff mostly from the bands that I didn't like so much. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Epitaph)

#### VOETSEK: *A Match Made in Hell: CD*

Need some thrash? If you haven't sampled the magic of Voetsek, this might satisfy the palette. Even better would be to go see them live. Every time I have seen them, I always leave knowing I had a good time. This a package chock full of stuff. Forty-two tracks they handpicked from fourteen different releases. Compilations, splits, 7"s, LPs, and an unreleased track. So much stuff to listen to, but it goes by so quickly. Only a couple of songs here top the two minute mark and they are

barely over that mark. Straight ahead thrash with hints of crossover. To the point and no bullshit. —Donofthedeat (Six Weeks)

#### WEIRDO / BEGEIRDO:

##### **Live in L.A. & Goleta: CDEP**

Three tracks in about twenty-two minutes, terribly adorable lo-fi noise jams performed entirely on shoeboxes, rubber bands and overdriven teakettles, augmented by the howling and yowling of the entire all-ages populations of Pasadena and Goleta, respectively. While it may be short on riffs (just one for the entire twelve-minute first track) and tuneability, it's long on youthful exuberance, feedback, and girls. Short on supply though; only one hundred made. —Cuss Baxter (Sycophanticide)

#### WITCH HUNT: *Blood Red States: LP*

So I did buy this before the band came through on tour. Heard from people I respect that this was going to be a good release, and, of course, the fact that there was a sort of special pressing, I had to jump. It was not what I was expecting. For some reason, I thought this band was going to be more in the metal/crust vein. In turn, this band plays more of an anarcho punk breed of music. But not to pigeonhole the band, the music is more adventurous and intricate. Without resorting to just playing fast to produce energy, they weave in more sonic energy with the layers of sound they produce. The songs are mid tempo but are atmospheric with the interweaving of guitars. With the addition of having two female vocalists and a male vocalist, the singers add another level

to the mix. Kind of makes me think of what the next Harum Scarum record might sound like, or if Detestation kept going. I have heard Tragedy references elsewhere and I would also add to that. The power of the music is in the song writing. After listening to this LP, I was really excited to see them live. Me and a couple of hundred can attest to have enjoyed their set. —Donofthedeat (Profane Existence)

#### WRITER:

##### **Chuckle Chuckle Motherfucker: CD**

Okay, despite their oh-so-humorous "We're making the best music to ever grace the planet" line at the end of the credits on this thing, they are definitely on to something here. There's the same kinda opus-coupled-with-a-faceplant exoskeleton that bands like Dan Padilla and The Broadways have crafted and the blood and guts quality of early, mid-tempo Hot Water Music. Wristers managed to create an atmospheric, melancholy-as-shit punk record here; lots of ringing chords, gravel-in-the-throat vocal interplay and just a ton of these individually soaring, awesome moments. It's not a perfect record (the lack of lyrics is the biggest bummer here), but there are a plethora of moments on *Chuckle* that make me wish it would start raining again so I could go walk around and listen to this thing. —Keith Rosson (Alaska)



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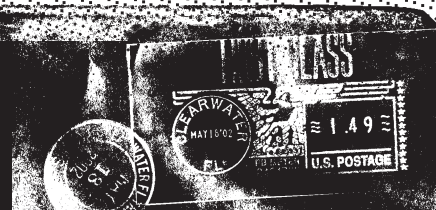
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(URBAN GUERRILLA ZINE)

#### **BAD CAKES #1,**

½" x 5 ½", color printed, 23 pgs.  
 As most anyone who knows me is already aware, I'm a huge fan of pie. Fruit pie, cream pie, chicken pot pie, give 'em all to me. But as far as cakes go, I'm pretty blasé. This entire zine is dedicated, not only to cakes, but bad cakes. They give a disclaimer that no cake is actually bad as, "All are made with good intentions. Many are made with love." But this tends to leave me asking, if no cakes are bad, then why not find a more appropriate name for the zine?

The basic format for the *Bad Cakes* is to have a picture of a cake alongside their comments on the design, decoration, or comments the baker had reported (all the cakes are taken from a cake contest-based website). Some of their commentary got a chuckle out of me, but other times I found that the only thing funny was what the original content had stated (I'm sure the humor was not intentional). Several of the pictures are of a pretty low quality (as they did come from a website), which makes it difficult to see the details that are then being commented on.

Overall, I feel pretty much the same about *Bad Cakes* as I do any old cake. I'll nibble at it because it's there, and I'll enjoy it enough as I'm eating it. Ultimately, it's not a bad first issue. It's no pie, but shit, it's still dessert. —Megan (Bad Cakes, PO Box 8203, Portland, ME 04104, [www.backawayfromthecake.com](http://www.backawayfromthecake.com))

#### **BIG HANDS #1 & 2, 50 cents ea. or trades, 5 ½" x 4 ½",**

copied, 28 & 36 pgs.  
 Man, I might've found (or rather, been sent) a new favorite zine here. Aaron's going to come across plenty of *Burn Collector* comparisons when he sends this out, it's inevitable; not counting the North Carolina reference point, there's just such a similarity in the "cynical wordsmith who denounces hipsterism while still fully aware that he's a hipster" thing they're both doing. Aaron's a terrific writer, dismantling everything from punk tours to living in Brooklyn to

all-night diners. All of it done in such a manner that it was welcoming and still just a tad self-righteous. But the guy's got the vocabulary and the sheer... *verve* (did I just write that?) to pull it off. Issue one is a fairly scattered (chronologically speaking) collection of stories, while issue two mostly tackles a) touring and b) a road trip he took with some people that he met via rideshare on Craigslist. Trade zines with this guy, or send him a buck and get both issues. Highly recommended. —Keith Rosson (Aaron, 1104 Imperial Rd., Cary, NC 27511)

#### **DEGENERATION OVERDRIVE #3,**

Free, 8" x 5", copied  
 This is a very sharp-looking half-sized zine out of Canada that focuses on rock'n'roll in the very dirty rock sense. The cover interview is with Nashville Pussy, and there are other interviews with the Subhumans, the Nerds and many, many more. All the Q&As are very well done, with thoughtful, interesting questions. There are also ads and record and DVD reviews. Most big-time music magazines only wish they could've started this nice. —Kurt Morris (Degeneration Overdrive, 5505 Iberville #236, Montreal QC, H2G 2B2, Canada, [degenerationoverdrive@gmail.com](mailto:degenerationoverdrive@gmail.com))

#### **FAST TIMES #2, \$3 or trade, 5 ½" x 8 ½",**

copied, 36 pgs.  
 One of them regional type of deals—if you're familiar with San Pedro's *The Rise and Fall of the Harbor Area* zine, then you're getting the rough idea. Centered around the North Park neighborhood of San Diego, there's some really nice writings from the editor and various contributors about the so-ugly-it's-pretty dichotomy of the area, the majority of it being really well-written. I've never even been to San Diego and the majority of these folks really did some nice work—they did a great job of encapsulating the ups and down of the neighborhood. There's also some photos, something about baseball's Ted Williams

(who lived there), a word search, a crossword puzzle, a maze, a few other lil tidbits and, my favorite part of all, Dave Dick's story about going to a Dead Kennedy's show in 1982. Hasn't quite gotten to the stature and excellence of *Trafotha*, but let's give 'em some time. —Keith Rosson (Fast Times, 2587 University Ave. Apt. 3, San Diego, CA 92104)

#### **LOITERING IS GOOD #12,**

\$1.50, 8 ½" x 11", copied, 44 pgs.  
 It's pretty much this guy's sketchbook, with a few letters and personal writings thrown in. He's sarcastic as hell, and that translates both in the written introduction and closer here, as well as his caustic, smart-assed line-drawings, which make up the bulk of this thing. Strongly reminiscent of Raymond Pettibon's stuff—simple line drawings accompanied by acerbic captions that, when placed together, throw the whole thing into an entirely different light. Decent stuff. And apparently he printed this entire zine via a copier he bought for \$20 off some dude on the street. Lucky bastard. —Keith Rosson (J. Alone c/o P. Ibo, 77 Pearl St., SF, CA 94103)

#### **OH NO! THE ROBOT #8,**

\$2, 8" x 5", copied  
 I lay on my air mattress in my apartment on a Monday afternoon, jobless, and proceed to read what has to be one of the best zines I've read in a long time. We're talking *Burn Collector* level material here, people. From the first page, the author, Chris, starts telling a story of his life in Saskatoon (I'm assuming) with his roommate, drunken parties, friends that disappear in relationships and the feeling of being the odd man out. It's actually quite morose by the end, as most of his friends have left him and he's stuck mulling over the situation in which he finds himself. And yet there remains a certain sense of optimism in his writing that doesn't leave things feeling quite as dark as they could have been. The whole thing is typed with no illustrations (except the front cover) but is still intriguing and

keeps you reading page after page. Any fans of Aaron Cometbus or Al Burian's style of personal narrative would do themselves a great favor to discover Chris Morin's heartfelt and introspective (without being pretentious) writing. Here's to hoping I can read more of his work in the future. —Kurt Morris (Chris Morin, 829 Main St., Saskatoon SK, S7H 0K2, Canada, [ohnotherobot@hotmail.com](mailto:ohnotherobot@hotmail.com))

#### **PASAZER #21, 15 zlotys (about \$5), 8 ½" x 11",**

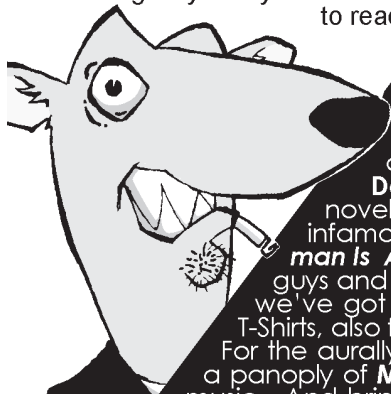
glossy, fancy, 145 pgs.  
 This is what one might call the most popular punk zine in Poland. While living there in 2003, I found this zine and marveled at its overall glossy high production, its underground punk rock contents covering both Polish and foreign bands, its general hugeness (145 pages!), the free CD in every issue including bands covered inside, and the low cover price (considering what you get, which is a lot). Very well organized, laid out, and researched. I met Bezko (Pasazer's creator) at a Conflict show in Krakow once, and he seemed like a nice, wiry Polish fella. I enjoy this zine for two reasons. It is totally jam-packed with tons of information, and it is all in Polish. Not many American punker types would understand most of this, but those who've flipped through my copies have been sucked into it for extended periods of time. It's just immensely interesting, almost like finding out that there's a thriving punk community on the moon, or Mars. Bezko also runs the Pasazer record label which produces many high quality Polish punk recordings for dirt cheap. Columns, tons of band interviews, travel punks' road diaries (this issue's diary is from some Polish travel punk in Japan: amazing), piles of reviews, and tiny print galore. This issue contains 7 Seconds, Madball, Farben Lehre, Duane Peters, Alians, Leniwiec, Kevin K, Gogol Bordello, CF98, Uz Jsme Doma, Bad Religion, and just oodles more. Super fanzin polski, bardzo ciekawa ociewiescie, cudownie, najlepszy! Moja ulubiona,



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na pewno! —Rhythm Chicken (Pasazer, PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3, Poland, [www.pasazer.pl](http://www.pasazer.pl))

**POST-IT DIARIES, THE,** 5 ½" x 8 ½", photocopied, 56 pgs. Amy Adoyzie (creator of *Lululand* and *Funzilla* zines, layout genius extraordinaire for *Razorcake*, and all around rad lady) knows how to tell a story. She's one of those people who you don't care how many times she repeats a story because each time is bound to be slightly different, and each difference is going to be worth hearing. She is one of the most talented people I've met. In addition to her zines, she illustrates, plays in bands, takes pictures, works hard in a pretty wide range of jobs (like heading off to China to teach English), and writes a column. All this and she makes a lot of sandwiches too.

In *Post-it*, Amy writes about her time working as a New Media Associate for a local PBS branch. The majority of the writing comes from entries on her blog, with additional contributions and insights added later. I'm not the biggest proponent of perzines, but this falls into many of my categories of

gave me a better feel for the whole story. Highly, highly recommended. —Megan (while she's in China, Amy Adoyzie c/o Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042)

**PROFANE EXISTENCE #50/51,** \$10., 6" x 9", archival print, full color glossy cover, perfect bound, 194 pgs., plus a comp. CD. I have a few problems with this issue of *Profane Existence*. First, the large section dedicated to the injustice of the Prison Industrial Complex. While I agree that the U.S. criminal justice system is anything but just, at the same time prisons house some seriously sick fucks. Before reading articles by or sending free stuff to someone in prison I want to know why they're in there. They are neither all innocent nor all my comrades. No offence to our readers in the joint but I'm sure you know this better than anyone. Second, great care needs to be taken when dealing with political subjects whether speaking of prisons, the lies of the right wing, or the current atrocities being committed by the U.S. government around the world. If such subjects are only examined from a single point of view no new

it's worth it. I remember *Profane Existence* being one of my favorite zines. Unfortunately, I don't like the direction they're taking it. Save the \$10, buy a cube of Pabst. —Chris Devlin (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

**PUNK PAGAN #5 & #6,** Free, 8" x 5", copied. "If all this stuff [robbing 7-11s, etc.] had not happened and I'd not smoked crack and stole shit and come to prison I'd not have met my wife." —Punk Pagan, #6 pg. 42. That has got to be one of the funniest things I've ever read. Then again, this has to be one of the more interesting zines I've ever read. At first, the entire thing being hand-written kind of irked me, but I soon realized it's because the zinester in charge of *Punk Pagan*, Maniac Mike, is in prison. Wow. I know there are other zines out there done by prisoners, but I've never read them. Mike is doing time in Rhode Island and he's also a pagan as well as an old school punk (he's forty-eight). This makes *Punk Pagan* one of the more unique zines I've ever read, due to the author's age, position in life, and interests. While the pagan-related items weren't really something I

was behind it, I thought it would really suck, but I was pleasantly surprised by the diversity of the content and the bands covered. There are news items about punk band members' who were recently married, engaged, having babies, etc. There's a feature on rating various beers, punks with their cars, their pets, what they're listening to, the scoop on their first band and first time being intimate with someone and so on. So many little nuggets mean, in the end, this zine ends up being chock full of interesting stories. That's not to mention that there are interviews with Henry Rollins, AFI, H2O and many more. On top of it all, there's all kinds of great photos and, thankfully, not too much of a Fat Wreck bias, either. I'm not sure I'd necessarily go out of my way to pick this up again, but it's still pretty interesting to read nonetheless. —Kurt Morris (Punk Rock Confidential, 236 W. Portal Ave. Suite 134, SF, CA 94127)

**ROCKS AND BLOWS #2,** \$1, 5 ½" x 8 ½", printed, glossy cover, 32 pgs. Four short memoir pieces about when the author was a junkie. I think I went into this with unfair expectations. I guess I wanted some answers. After I've had several friends fall into

"RAILING AGAINST CORPORATE SELF PROMOTION AND THEN DESCRIBING YOUR OWN RECORDS AS 'DEFINITELY AN ESSENTIAL RELEASE...' IS COMPLETELY DISINGENUOUS."

exception. First, it's funny. I laughed in a range from giggle to guffaw (with even a few chortles thrown in for good measure). Secondly, it's interesting. While I have no desire to ever work in an office environment, I'm intrigued by it, and by the people who do work there. Throughout the zine, Amy tries to look at her job from a variety of angles: as fulfillment of an immigrant family's American Dream and as a source of income, amusement, and frustration.

The topics range from venting about her boss, to work bathroom etiquette, to crushes, and to jars of jelly that she just can't open. Even though I'd read the majority of this as her blog, I liked having it in a portable form, and the later additions (set in a different typeface to distinguish it) gives it a lot more coherence. Also, there's no way that I would have sat and read this in its entirety online, and I think that reading it all at once

understanding of the root causes or the solutions to these problems will ever be obtained. "Group think" is devastating to the cause of freedom and preaching to the choir will never convert or inform anyone. Now for the record reviews section. 185 reviews and three of them are overtly negative. It's hard to take seriously when they like everything they hear, either that or they cherry pick what they review and that's just as bad. The reviewers save the most glowing reviews for their own releases on *Profane Existence* Records, describing one album as "...definitely a keeper!" Railing against corporate self promotion and then describing your own records as "Definitely an essential release..." is completely disingenuous. The magazine comes with a comp CD that has the usual hit and miss comp fare, but since you have to buy the magazine to get it, I can't say that

was so interested in, it's nice to have someone representing a distinctive voice in the zine scene. Some of his other rants about punk, politics, and everyday people were more up my alley, though, and I found them really cool to read. With every zine there's always a few things I'm not really into (the list of *South Park* episodes he's seen, for example) but on the whole, *Punk Pagan* seems to fill a niche that many others aren't exactly covering. —Kurt Morris (Punk Pagan Publications, PO Box 282, Manville, RI 02838)

**PUNK ROCK CONFIDENTIAL** \$3.95, 8 1/2" x 11", glossy cover and pages, 98 pgs. This glossy, professional magazine is the child of one Fat Mike (yeah, I've never heard of him either) and covers a wide range of punk bands and punkers all over. At first, once I saw how professional it looked and who

becoming/choose to become junkies, I've always wondered how it ever got to that point. How they could go from some of the most loyal, decent people to people who would lie to your face and steal anything from those closest to them if it could be sold to get them high. He doesn't answer those questions, so I felt let down, but only because I went in with my own baggage. He takes the reader through the mindset of the need, the rotating glance around a room to see what could be sold, the lies he told, the lack of trust, and the relief in knowing the drugs would be there soon. It never comes off as apologetic or glorifying (which is the danger with something like this). Instead, it relies on the fact that Kuprick wrote about in *Yama*: "the only horror is that there is no horror." To think of someone going through this lifestyle, to read the desperation and the panic, when it is not presented



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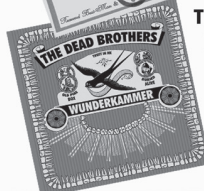
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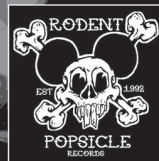


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as something horrific (Why would it be? It was his everyday life, nothing extraordinary), makes it all the more devastating. Obviously not a feel-good read, but worth picking up. My biggest problem was that it felt as though I was thrust into some situations here without knowing who he was talking about. I'm not sure if some of the characters were introduced in the first issue, but it would have been beneficial to have small introductions to the characters. His wife is identified in the introduction, but I rarely read intros, prefaces, or other added writing until after I've read the actual work at hand. —Megan (1002 W. Montrose Ave, Box 194, Chicago, IL 60613)

**SUGAR NEEDLE**, \$2 (or decent trades of zines/candy), 4 1/4" x 11", photocopied and hand colored, 16pgs. I am the target audience for *Sugar Needle*. Do I like candy? Yes. Growing up, we weren't allowed to eat candy (we used honey instead of refined sugar and carob instead of chocolate). I didn't have my first taste of chocolate until I was in school. So, I grew up doing what any reasonable kid would do: save my allowance and ride my bike the ten miles to a store that sold penny candy, and spend every last cent. And that's stuck with me. I eat candy until I get a bellyache (and then I usually eat a bit more). I'm prone to try pretty much anything if it's found in the confection aisle.

*Sugar Needle* has that same obsessive quality. They've tried all the candies you're used to, and they've moved beyond that. They have the need to explore, to hunt down rare candies.

In this issue, there is a long feature on Kit Kats, which (as they are owned by Hershey in the U.S., but by Nestle in Canada and Japan) release different styles or flavors regionally. This is relatively common. Japan is known to have seasonal, and even gender-specific, variations (look at those delicious stick treats, Pocky) to please the palette. I live in walking distance of Little Tokyo, so I try to scout some of these Japanese-released flavors from time to time. The article on Kit Kats mentions flavors like banana, red wine, strawberry, and maple syrup. Oh, we poor Americans with our boring, standard flavors!

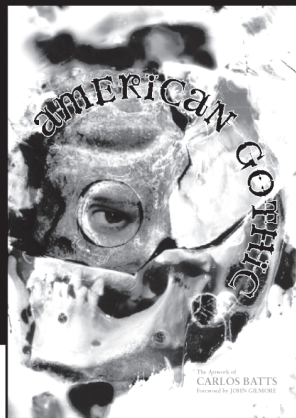
There are other features on imaginary candy and imaginary candy games, an interview with Amy Sedaris (from *Strangers with Candy*), and reviews of candy this fiend has never even seen. As sweet as its subject matter. —Megan (PO Box 66835, Portland, OR 97290)

**THIRTY-THREE CONVOLUTED SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD'S SIMPLEST ROBBERY**, \$5.50, 5" x 8", printed, 44 pgs. I have this vision of the author of this zine sitting in some small apartment, probably a studio, high out of his

mind on mushrooms or speed, and it's about midnight. He's *not* going to bed anytime soon. He's been drinking sake and scarfing uppers so much his head is just at the start of what will no doubt balloon into a massive headache tomorrow—whenever that might come. He sits down in front of an old computer with a big, bulky CPU and ancient, gigantic monitor that hums whenever it's turned on. From this desktop machine (a behemoth, really) he just starts to type. And he types. His mind is moving so fast his fingers cannot keep up. There's no time for line breaks or parenthesis. It's just moving so fast in his head (the story, that is) that he must keep typing. The story is hardly coherent, ranging from one thing to the next, with only loosely related phrasing holding it all together (and even that's a stretch to the non-drug-ridden mind). When he reads this tomorrow, he won't have a clue what was going on inside of his head in order to cause him to write myriad pages, stream of consciousness style. However, the next day he wakes up and doesn't even have a chance to read it because he immediately starts drinking and pounding speed and shrooms, hand over fist style. He starts to make outrageous orange/red/yellow covers for the zine and begins to print it out. He then proceeds to mail it to all sorts of zines for review. And here we are. —Kurt Morris (David Moscovich,

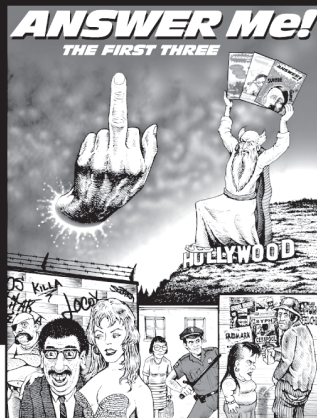
Fukuoka, Fukuoka Shi, Sawara-ku Yayoi, 1-5-10, Square Fujisaki #304, davidmoscovich@yahoo.com)

**URBAN GUERRILLA ZINE #16**, \$4.50 ppd., 8 1/2" x 11", offset, 68 pgs. Glossy-covered Bay Area hardcore zine—hardcore as in lots of sleeveless t-shirts, tattoos, and skulls. This one's really, really nice—tons of crystal-clear photos, scene reports, and interviews. These cats are obviously enamored with their scene, and it shows; the love's apparent. Bands and folks covered include Kylesa, Amebix, Laudanum, Antiworld, folks who volunteered at the now-defunct Slaughterhaus venue in Oakland, Words That Burn, and Keep Laughing. There's also tons of fest, show, record, DVD and zine reviews. The layout's impeccable, the photos are, again, awesome, and the level of care put into this one is top-notch. These kids rip, so if you be leaning more towards Strung Up than Strung Out, grab this one quick—it's one of the most rock-solid representations of a scene, geographically or otherwise, that I've come across in a long time. —Keith Rosson (UGZ, PMB #419, 1442A Walnut St., Berkeley, CA 94709)



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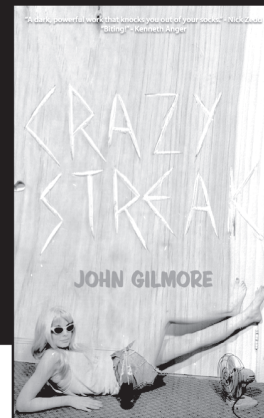
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Blag Dahlia, of the infamous Dwarves, has written this truly twisted tale of a young girl coming of age with no apologies. Nina is the story of an object of desire who gives as good as she gets, spanning the USA in search of cheap thrills and black lipstick. Cover art by Detroit artist Niagara (of Destroy All Monsters).



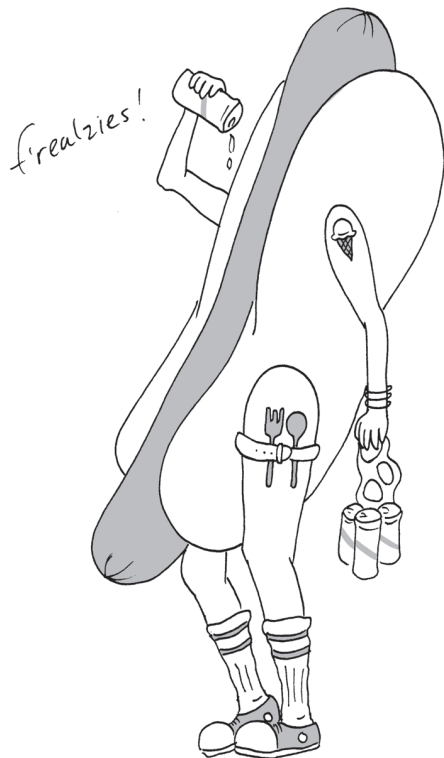
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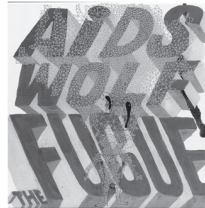
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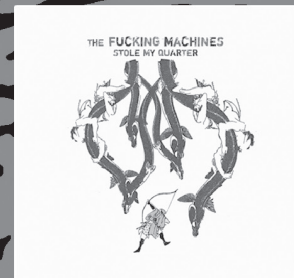


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## Booked: The Last 150 Years Told Through Mug Shots

By Giacomo Papi, 205 pgs.

As a person whose untidy behavior has several times landed me in front of a police department photographer, I've always been fascinated with mug shots. As a kid—back when my untidy behavior only earned me trips to the principal's office and endless opportunities to languish in the detention room after school—I wished that I could collect mug shots like other kids collected baseball cards. My bedroom was garishly decorated with reproductions of vintage wanted posters of public enemies like Machine Gun Kelly, Jesse James, and Baby Face Nelson.

More recently, I've found myself being washed over with a malicious glee whenever a mug shot of some fallen celebrity would keep resurfacing in the media like a body that just keeps floating to the surface. And the more the celebrity looked like a drowned rat in the picture, the better. Glen Campbell was one of my favorites; once the very picture of the well-scrubbed, unblemished, country cherub with the sparkling smile and perfect coif, he looked in his mug shot like a dirty bomb had gone off in the center of his face. The flash of the police photographer's camera had burned into the stubbled flesh of his scowling puss and brought out every sour crag and pock mark; his mouth looking like the over-sized crooked frown of a badly carved jack-o-lantern and his burning, beady eyes and messed up hair topping off the unforgettable look—the likeness of which I'm sure would make a Halloween mask to rival the famous Tor Johnson mask that's been popular for decades. I can only hope that I looked half that unpresentable in any of my mug shots.

What I'm getting at here is this: you would really have to drop the ball in some spectacularly inept way to put out a mug shot book that I wasn't at least moderately interested in. And Giacomo Papi has not dropped the ball. While I would hesitate to label *Booked* "ingenious"—as they do in the press release that came with the book—it is without question a voyeuristic treat. It's a veritable rogue's gallery packed with all manner of human vermin: thugs, killers, rampallions and muligrubs. And, of course, rock stars—from the more genuine fuck-ups like Syd Barrett to the more "edgy" corporate products like Eminem and Marilyn Manson.

But having a few frauds in a book like this is probably unavoidable. At least Papi had

the good judgment to spare us the mooning photos of the most fatuous of the rock'n'roll "bad boys"—namely Tommy Lee and Kid Rock—whose arrests are little more than PR moves and their mug shots nothing more than photo ops. Admittedly, they aren't anywhere near as vile and outright weird as Michael Jackson (who is in the book), but at least the King of Pop isn't faking anything—well, anything other than being a human being, that is.

Pouring over these photos I was struck, once again, by the similarities of a society collecting mug shots and a head-hunting tribe collecting shrunken heads. In a way, mug shots are modern day versions of shrunken heads; they are quite literally the "heads" of the enemy or bad guy shrunk down. And silenced. Our tidier modern version just doesn't require messy brain removal and boiling flesh and sewing lips shut. But it is a sort of taxidermy nonetheless. Papi himself writes in the Afterword to the book: "the practice of police photography, in short, relieved the taxonomic and taxidermic impulse that lurked in the terrified heart of the nineteenth century." And you don't have to be a taxidermy buff like Eddie Gein (who, unfortunately, isn't in the book) to see that.

I'll even take it an odd step further and suggest that the collecting of mug shots is not entirely different than Cynthia Plaster Caster collecting plaster casts of the genitals of rock stars with whom she has had sex with. But that might steer us down some very dark Reichian alleyways that are best left unexplored at this point. Whatever the case, *Booked* is a fascinating collection of the photos and stories of just some of the people over the past 150 years who have found themselves caught in the fishnet of some authority body or another and pilloried for the public viewing. After reading the book, I was left wanting to see more. But maybe Global Warming will take care of that for me; with all the human heads overheating on our baking planet, I don't think Papi will have to wait another 150 years to have enough material for a sequel. —Aphid Peewit (Seven Stories Press, 140 Watts Street, New York, NY, 10013)

## The Complete Peanuts: 1959-1960

By Charles Schultz,  
323 pgs., hardcover, \$28.95

Ever since I was little, there was something about Peanuts that made me sad. At first I thought it was Charlie Brown's constant despair and unease, his inability to make friends, and his constant self-criticism. Maybe that's part of it, but there's something else, too. As someone who subscribes to the philosophy behind the Mr. T Experience line, "At the age of six or seven I was in my prime/ Ever since that time it's been a steady decline," I've spent most of my adult life obsessed with the culture of childhood nostalgia. One of my favorite artists, Henry Darger, spent his life as a recluse, drawing thousands of pictures of children fighting evil in a strange, mythical world. Darger man-

aged to immerse himself in this world almost completely, leaving his apartment only to work as a janitor and attend church.

Darger saw childhood as something strange and wonderful, full of mystery and possibility. Schultz saw childhood as every bit as sad and melancholic as the adult world. Charlie Brown looks like an old man. Linus builds a sand castle, and it gets washed away as soon as he finishes. Lucy competes for attention. Occasionally, there are some sentimental moments, but they always seem bittersweet.

*Peanuts: 1959-1960* is the latest in a twenty-five book collection, published by Fantagraphics. When they're done, Fantagraphics will have reprinted, in order, every single Peanuts strip, starting with 1950, in beautiful hardcover editions. In this installment, Lucy sets up shop as a DIY psychoanalyst, Linus discovers the pumpkin patch where he awaits the Great Pumpkin, and Snoopy moves into his doghouse.

One of my favorite strips features Linus showing Charlie Brown his collection of rocks. Linus says, "These rocks are meant to be thrown in anger! When I get real mad, I throw rocks as hard as I can!" Linus then picks up the rocks and starts throwing. "This is for all the nasty things they said about George Washington! This is for people who hate little kids! And this is for people who kick dogs! This is for hot summer nights! And this is for cold winter mornings! And this is for lies and broken promises!"

Although Schultz's work often seems dark, in many ways, he was living the life of a child in the best possible way. "It seems beyond comprehension of people that someone can be born to draw comic strips," he said in his official biography. "But I think I was."

Only the true collector could afford to own this entire collection, but, if you're looking for a Christmas present for me... —Maddy (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115)

## Same Sex in the City

(So Your Prince Charming Is Really a Cinderella)  
By Lauren Levin and Lauren Blitzer, 250 pgs.

Maybe my problem with this book is that I: a) don't like *Sex and the City*, b) don't own expensive high heels, and c) would rather kill myself than say, let alone write, something like the following (describing the writer coming out to her parents during a tropical vacation): "Am I happy I had my C-Section on the beach in the Turks and Caicos? Yes. That day, I gave birth to a bouncy little thing I named Honesty."

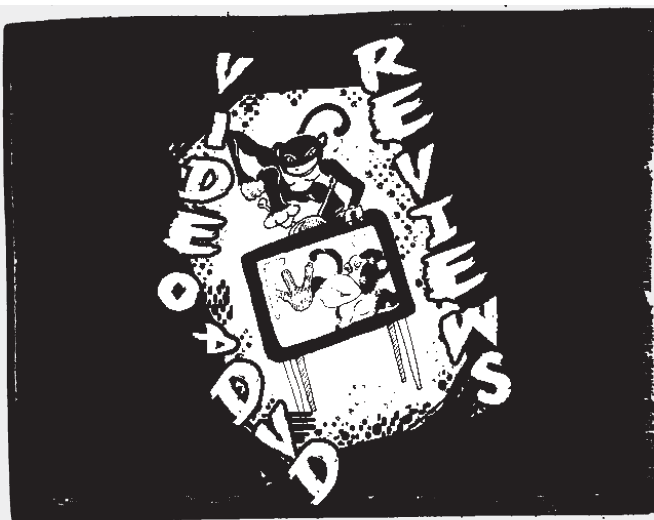
Wow. This book combines the writing style of a women's fashion magazine (one of the authors used to work for *Teen Vogue*), with the "I'm so crazy! I work a corporate job and have a lot of sex!" mentality of, say, *The Real World*. In fact, it even includes a short piece from a *Real World* cast member. In other words, *why the fuck did they send this to Razorcake?*

If you're looking for advice about coming out, I'd recommend the following: Put on any Team Dresch record, jump around in your room by yourself until you've worked yourself into a frenzy of self-acceptance and hatred-for-dumb-people, and, when you're danced out, read *Two Teenagers in Twenty* by Ann Heron.

And, if you're into fire, I have a, um, collection of paper I could give you. —Maddy (Simon & Schuster)







### 16 Horsepower Live: DVD

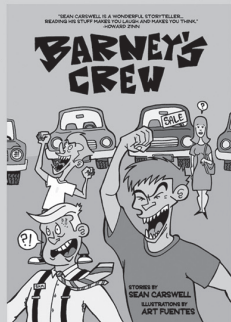
Never having heard 16HP, I was expecting some kind of musclem-core something or other, but it turns out 16 horsepower is only enough for like a small tractor, not a '69 Barracuda, so that shows you how much I know about cars and alt-country. 16 Horsepower the band were from Denver and played a brand of folk rock based in part on American mountain music—banjo, acoustic guitar, concertina, a Carter Family cover—but with some modernity to it (also a Joy Division cover), coming off like maybe a Tennessee Pogues. This two-disc DVD has decent-quality, multi-camera footage from three shows from 2002, 1996, and 2004, including what turned out to be their last, though they didn't know that at the time; as well as some random

tour shots (loading the truck, etc.) and a few minutes from a rehearsal where main-man David Eugene Edwards cracks one of the few smiles of the whole affair. I'd say: essential for completists, recommended for fans, rent it if you have an interest in old (pre-bluegrass) American music and a tolerance for corruption of same. —Cuss Baxter (Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141, [www.alternativetentacles.com](http://www.alternativetentacles.com))

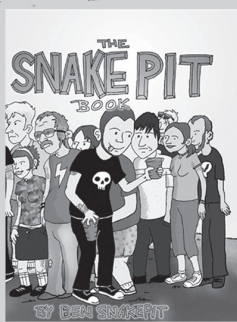
### Nardwuar The Human Serviette:

#### Doot Doola Doot Doo... Doot Dool! DVD

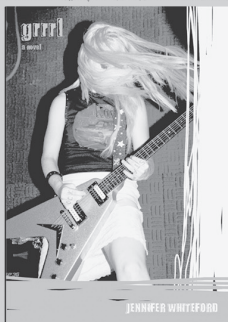
This is one comprehensive DVD. On a hung-over Sunday I overdosed on Nardwuar as I sat and watched hours of Nardwuar interviews—the DVD is a total of five and a half hours. As a non-Canadian native, I never had the pleasure of watching Nardwuar on his music channel; I only read his transcriptions in this lovely mag. But, Nardwuar is good at what he does. His interviewing and researching skills are immaculate. Despite his awkward demeanor, plaid overload wardrobe, and weasel-like voice, the man knows what he's talking about. Interviewees can't help but be impressed at how much he knows about music. A two-disc DVD, the first disc is a compilation of funny interviews with celebrities and politicians that his music channel put together. He literally interviews everybody from Destiny's Child to GWAR. And he's well versed in all of them. Some of the best parts are watching Nardwuar get beat up or thrown around by his interviewees who are annoyed with him. The best is when Henry Rollins told him he had bad breath. The second disc is the uncut interviews—I watched Jello Biafra, Snoop Dogg, Michael Moore, and Ian MacKaye's interviews. The Ian MacKaye one is very informative. After like three hours, I had to stop watching though. The "Doot Doo's" got to my brain. Great DVD, highly entertaining, informative, and fun. —Jenny Moncayo (Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)



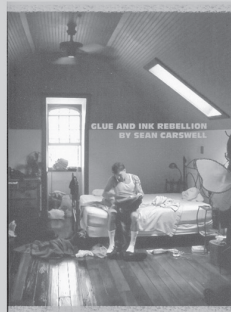
**Barney's Crew**  
by Sean Carswell  
\$10.00 ppd.



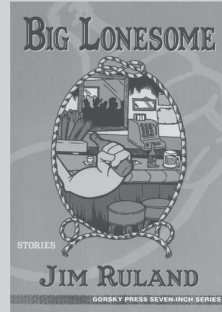
**The Snake Pit Book**  
by Ben Snakepit  
\$10.00 ppd.



**Grrrl**  
by Jennifer Whiteford  
\$10.00 ppd.



**Glue and Ink Rebellion**  
by Sean Carswell  
\$10.00 ppd.

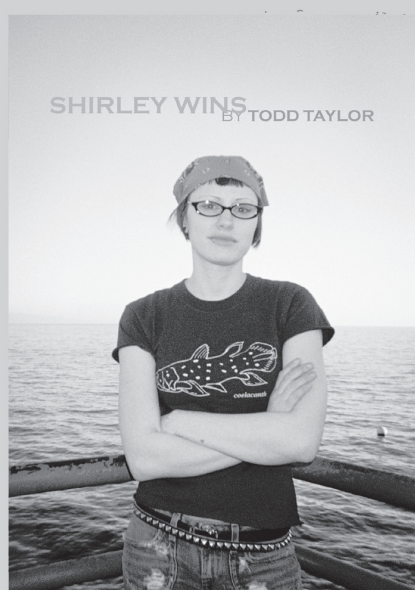


**Big Lonesome**  
by Jim Ruland  
\$10.00 ppd.

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